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Coaching by Scaffolding: Increasing Teacher Questioning Through Structured Modeling and Feedback

Sarah J. Little

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COACHING BY SCAFFOLDING: INCREASING TEACHER QUESTIONING
THROUGH STRUCTURED MODELING AND FEEDBACK

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Daniel, and my children, Zane and Addy Mae. Daniel, thank you for your support as I have taken this on over the past few years. I could not have done this without you. Zane and Addy Mae, you can achieve anything if you work hard. Set goals and meet them. “Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed.” Proverbs 16:3

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To the teachers who graciously allowed me into their classrooms, I appreciate you, and your willingness to try something new. I also extend gratitude to my district, for allowing my research to take place, and cannot express enough thanks to my wonderful team- my colleagues on the leadership team have taught me so much, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

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Finally, to my family, thank you for your prayers, support, encouragement, and love. There are no words to convey my feelings now that I am at the end of this journey. Thank you again!

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the effects of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (Collet, 2008) when used by coaches to mentor teachers in best questioning practices in kindergarten through second grade classrooms. The researcher focused on questioning practices after observing missed opportunities to extend student thinking in primary school classrooms during teacher-student conferences in both reading and writing. Vicki Collet's Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (2008) was chosen as a coaching model based on the wide range of teacher experiences in the researcher's educational setting. This coaching model allowed the researcher to scaffold teachers based on their experience and need. After initial observations of teachers' small group and independent conferences with students to determine questioning practices, the researcher devised a plan to mentor teachers, including modeling, recommending, questioning, providing affirmation, and praising, all levels of coaching as defined by Collet (2008). The researcher provided a scaffold through these stages as appropriate for individual teachers. The researcher then conducted final observations of teachers' conferences with students and compared questioning data to initial conferences. After all data was collected and analyzed, the effectiveness of the coaching model was determined, and further use of the model as a coaching tool was evaluated.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AnC	Analyze Cognitive Process/Conceptual Knowledge
AnF	Analyze Cognitive Process/Factual Knowledge
AnMC	Analyze Cognitive Process/Meta-Cognitive Knowledge
AnP	Analyze Cognitive Process/Procedural Knowledge
ApC	Apply Cognitive Process/Conceptual Knowledge
ApF	Apply Cognitive Process/Factual Knowledge
ApMC	Apply Cognitive Process/Meta-Cognitive Knowledge
ApP	Apply Cognitive Process/Procedural Knowledge
CC	Create Cognitive Process/Conceptual Knowledge
CF	Create Cognitive Process/Factual Knowledge
CMC	Create Cognitive Process/Meta-Cognitive Knowledge
CP	Create Cognitive Process/Procedural Knowledge
EC	Evaluate Cognitive Process/Conceptual Knowledge
EF	Evaluate Cognitive Process/Factual Knowledge
EMC	Evaluate Cognitive Process/Meta-Cognitive Knowledge
EP	Evaluate Cognitive Process/Procedural Knowledge
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
GIR	Gradual Increase of Responsibility
GRR	Gradual Release of Responsibility
RC	Remember Cognitive Process/Conceptual Knowledge
RF	Remember Cognitive Process/Factual Knowledge

RMC..... Remember Cognitive Process/Meta-Cognitive Knowledge
 RP..... Remember Cognitive Process/Procedural Knowledge
 UC..... Understand Cognitive Process/Conceptual Knowledge
 UF..... Understand Cognitive Process/Factual Knowledge
 UMC..... Understand Cognitive Process/Meta-Cognitive Knowledge
 UP..... Understand Cognitive Process/Procedural Knowledge

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To emphasize the need for literacy achievement and its impact on learning in all curricular areas, our nation's leaders have put forth numerous efforts, dating back to the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*. Since then, former President Bill Clinton signed into law the *Improving America's Schools Act* in 1994, and then in 2001 the *No Child Left Behind Act* was implemented by former President George W. Bush. Common Core Standards were implemented across the United States by 2009, in hopes that most states would adopt these as educational guidelines (Sass, 2018). Following the Common Core implementation in 2011, states were allowed to request waivers from certain requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. In 2015, Former President Barack Obama replaced Bush's *No Child Left Behind Act* with the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which allowed more state control in determining school quality (Sass, 2018).

While legislation is constantly changing, rising expectations for students, along with high stakes assessments, are at the forefront of many classroom-based educators' minds. Individual states continue to implement their own legislation addressing reading achievement. Florida has implemented *Just Read, Florida!*, which in part places literacy coaches in schools, and provides grants to students to increase student reading achievement (Florida Statutes, 2018). Georgia has employed a "Literacy Task Force" to develop a plan for increasing literacy achievement (Georgia Dept of Ed, 2018).

Many states offer school vouchers; some have changed grading systems to be more uniform; others look toward teacher evaluations as the answer to student achievement (Myslinki, 2013). However, the continuous changes in legislation, along with differing policies across states, show that as a nation, we have not yet arrived at the answer for increasing student reading achievement.

For many years, the state of South Carolina has worked to strengthen students' reading achievement by providing professional development to teachers, particularly in regard to foundational, instructional, and reading assessment practices (South Carolina, 2016). In its "Intervention Guidance Document" (South Carolina, 2016), the state asserted that teachers with a firm knowledge base allowed for student success in reading in early grades, as opposed to programs and kids. Based on this belief, South Carolina "has provided opportunities to strengthen the administrator and teacher knowledge base in the areas of effective literacy instruction through ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities" (South Carolina, 2016, p. 3).

The most current reading initiative, Act 284, also known as *Read to Succeed Act* (South Carolina, 2014), was signed into effect in 2014 by former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley. In part, Act 284 (South Carolina, 2014) reads that each elementary school in the state of South Carolina should employ a reading/literacy coach, specifically to provide professional development for teachers to improve literacy instructional practices. Along with job-embedded professional development for teachers, the state of South Carolina, in collaboration with higher education institutions, developed literacy competencies for teachers, coaches, and administrators, to ensure that educators

maintain an extensive foundational and practical literacy knowledge base (South Carolina, 2014).

Why is there such an emphasis on reading achievement? Is this emphasis necessary in the primary grades? Numerous studies (Snow & Matthews, 2016; Center for Public Education, 2015; The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015) noted research showing that students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade face a significantly higher rate of school dropout and failure. It is imperative that students develop a strong foundation of literacy skills early in their academic experience; these foundational literacy skills include following print left to right and top to bottom, identify letters within a word, identifying punctuation, and linking letters with sounds (Clay, 1993). Yet Snow and Matthews' (2016) research asserted that most instruction in the primary grades is focused on constrained skills, which are the "finite" skills of literacy; letters, sounds, spelling rules, and more. If most students enter school for kindergarten, this allows for four years (kindergarten, first, second, and third grade) for these skills to be developed, practiced, and applied. However, as Snow and Matthews (2016) pointed out, the lack of state-level accountability (i.e., high stakes assessments) before the third-grade year results in less monitoring of the progress of skills in early school years.

This foundation of reading, or lack thereof, is not only apparent on high stakes reading assessments, but its impact can also be seen across other subject areas. Studies cited by Caponera, Sestito, and Russo (2016) support the idea that reading is truly a cross-disciplinary skill, greatly affecting student performance in not only content areas such as science and social studies, but mathematics as well. Student knowledge of vocabulary, attacking texts and identifying relevant/irrelevant information, and overall

comprehension- all unconstrained skills, as discussed by Snow and Matthews (2016)- played a critical role in how accessible other subject areas are to students.

The purpose of the present action research study was to investigate the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching tool and its implications on the questioning practices of classroom teachers, in accordance with the identified Problem of Practice (PoP) for this Dissertation in Practice (DiP). The use of questioning as an instructional tool by teachers not only extends students' critical thinking, but also language skills and awareness (Tofade, Elsner, & Haines, 2013). This research study looked specifically at the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent conference settings (both reading and writing), and how the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model affected teacher questioning.

Though not new to the assessment of student knowledge, the importance of teacher questioning is constantly being researched and improved. As the level of rigor for students continuously rises, teachers must examine their methods to not only meet state standards, but extend student learning, all while keeping students engaged.

Supon and Wolf (1994) looked at teacher questioning over 20 years ago, and current foundational research on the practice remains consistent. Kracl and Harshbarger (2017) reference teachers using Bloom's Taxonomy to prepare and generate high-level, critical-thinking questions, noting that students "need experience responding to and creating high-level thinking questions. Responding to and asking questions that require critical thinking...will allow students to receive powerful, purposeful instruction..." (p. 78). Wiggins and Wilbur (2015) agree, asserting that these questions "foster the kinds of

inquiries, discussions, and reflections that help learners find meaning in their learning and achieve deeper thought and better quality in their work” (p. 10).

This same view is shared by Peterson and Taylor (2012), who delved more into higher order questioning, specifically to accelerate students’ growth in reading. They asked “How are students at all achievement levels being given opportunities to talk and write at a higher level about the texts they are reading? What else could be done to foster higher order thinking among diverse students?” (p. 296). The authors also encouraged teacher modeling for students to demonstrate how to produce a higher order response, including further questioning, thinking aloud, answering the question themselves (Peterson & Taylor, 2012).

The role of questioning as a form of not only assessment, but also teaching, cannot be undervalued. Elder and Paul (1998) noted, “Questions define tasks, express problems, and delineate issues. Answers, on the other hand, often signal a full stop in thought. Only when an answer generates a further question does thought continue its life as such” (p. 297). Questioning is a practice which informs teachers of the knowledge students have acquired, as well as where their learning is going; the goal is not only to bring about an answer from a student, but to promote thinking (Buoncristiani and Buoncristiani, 2012).

Problem of Practice Statement

Green Pond Primary School¹ prides itself on its use of differentiated instruction to meet all students where they are as learners. Student achievement data is tracked frequently throughout the year and discussed with teachers in the use of planning

¹ Green Pond Primary School is a pseudonym.

instruction. The workshop model is implemented to teach reading and writing, so that students receive the opportunity for whole group, guided, and independent practice daily. In the workshop model, as described by Calkins (1994), students are first introduced to content as a whole group, with the presentation of a mini-lesson. Following the mini-lesson, students have work time independently as well as in small, guided groups, using this time to practice and develop skills. During this time, the teacher leads small groups in specific skill lessons and confers with these students, as well as conferring with students individually to assess their progress and extend their thinking (Slaughter, 2009). Finally, many workshops conclude with a share time, in which students share a skill or process they practiced, a piece of work, or a success/something they learned (Calkins, 1994). Beginning in preschool, and continuing through second grade, small groups are utilized by teachers to teach and reinforce skills, such as interacting with text and comprehension, across all academic areas. Preschool through second grade teachers also make use of independent conferences, through structured center play and reading and writing conferences. The purpose of these conferences was to assess and extend students' knowledge through conversation. Throughout administrative and personal observations, it was noted that across grade levels and lessons, teachers frequently used these conferences to assess a student's knowledge and set a goal for growth. However, within these conferences there were many missed opportunities for teaching, as the questions posed by teachers were directed to basic recall and description, as defined by Bloom's Taxonomy. The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy consists of 24 categories, ranging from "Remember" to "Create" in the Cognitive Process Dimension, and "Factual" Knowledge to "Meta-Cognitive" Knowledge in the Knowledge Dimension. While most

teacher questioning falls within the *Remember* category, including facts and memorization, it is the higher-level categories, which have students applying and evaluating these facts, Krathwohl (2002) asserted, that should be the ultimate goals of education. During these teacher-student conferences, teachers missed opportunities to employ a variety of questioning techniques, including not only increasing the frequency of questions asked, but also the level of questioning. This practice would allow teachers to maximize the student's achievement and potential.

Research Question

The researcher examined whether teachers were failing to take full advantage of opportunities to accelerate students' growth and understanding by limiting the levels and frequency of questions asked during independent conferences. In order to address this, the researcher attempted to answer the following overarching research question (RQ).

RQ1: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level of questions posed to students (as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy table) and the frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences?

Theoretical Framework

Based on Pearson and Gallagher's 1983 Gradual Release of Responsibility model, Collet's Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (2008) "can be used as a guide for gradually *increasing* learners' responsibility (Collet, 2012, p. 31). Using this model as a coaching tool, coaches scaffold their support of teachers, moving teachers towards independence in implementing modeled practices in the classroom (Collet, 2012). Collet (2012) noted, "The GIR model can be used by coaches as they consider these

variabilities: coaches can ‘place’ teachers on the GIR model as a way to begin considering the type of coaching support they might provide” (p. 43).

Overview of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility (GIR) Model

The Gradual Increase of Responsibility (GIR) Model, developed by Vicki Collet (2008), has its roots in Pearson and Gallagher’s Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (1983). Established by Collet as a way to scaffold coaching support of teachers, the goal of the model is to increase responsibility of teachers as they learn a new practice. Scaffolds of support include modeling, recommendations, questioning, affirming, and praising (Collet, 2008). It is important to note that these do not take place in a linear fashion, and each teacher may not need each support. “There is interplay among these coaching practices; however, overall there is a tendency toward decrease support and increase teacher responsibility” (Collet, 2013, p. 6). The precept of Collet’s model lies in the idea that teachers have varying background experiences, knowledge, and practices, and can grow as educators through the use of different supports (Collet, 2008). Collet (2013) noted, “For both teachers and students, scaffolding in the context of use is necessary for effective learning to take place. Learners benefit when they are supported *in the process of* changing their practices” (p. 2). Teachers may move between coaching supports such as modeling, recommendations, and questioning, in addition to receiving affirmation and praise from the coach, at any given time during a coaching cycle. The act of scaffolding by the coach allows for teachers to take responsibility for their instructional practices. “As teachers become cognizant of the thinking behind their own actions...opportunities for growth emerge” (Collet, 2013, p. 3).

Curriculum Theory

Awareness of the characteristics of adult learners is necessary in order to provide effective professional development to teachers in a way that allows them to build meaning and connections. While all learners, both child and adult, bring background knowledge and experience to any learning situation, the idea that adults differ in the regard that the level of experience and knowledge they bring to a situation is much more advanced and developed (Lyons and Pinnell, 2001; Muñoz, Welsh, & Chaseley, 2018). Further, “Adults engage in the learning process when the content and/or new knowledge relate to their current experiences and they are allowed to actively participate in the learning process” (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010, p. 3). In fact, it is the scaffolding of skills in an authentic environment which leads to the transfer of these new skills to everyday practice (Roumell, 2019).

The constructivist theory of education has its basis in the experience that “personal perspectives are shaped and changed as we engage in cooperative social activity, conversation, and debate with others around common purposes, concerns, and interests” (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, p. 4). Not only should teachers take an active and collaborative role in the professional development they are receiving, but students should also take an active and collaborative role in their education, which, in the context of this study, takes the form of student conferences with the teacher.

Constructivism and Vygotsky

The constructivist theory acknowledges that a shift in understanding will occur over time, as the learner reflects upon their thinking and practice. The theory also recognizes that learners must be met where they are and should be provided with

appropriate experiences to help them grow. “The constructivist movement in recent cognitive psychology has reemphasized the active role students play in acquiring knowledge and the social construction of knowledge has been an important principle in sociocultural theory” (Terwel, 1999, p. 195).

Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (“zo-ped”) recognized that learning is dependent upon the existing level of the child’s ability. “Vygotsky believed that, whereas scientific concepts work their way ‘down’ imposing their logic on the child, spontaneous concepts work their way ‘up,’ meeting the scientific concept and allowing the learner to accept its logic” (Fosnot & Perry, 1996, p. 20). The “zo-ped” varies from child to child and “reflects the ability of the learner to understand the logic of the scientific concept” (Fosnot & Perry, 1996, p. 20). For this reason, Vygotsky urged schools to look at the process through which students approached and solved problems, as well as their collaboration and cooperation with their teacher. In fact, Vygotsky viewed language development as dependent on social interactions and saw this as a driving force in intellectual development (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).

John Dewey

Vygotsky’s view on social interaction related closely with John Dewey’s Progressivism theory on curriculum and learning. Dewey proposed that students play an integral role in curricular planning, as allowed by their personal experience. As Simpson and Jackson (2003) stated,

Worth noticing is Dewey’s claim that “instruction” is “moving” from the present experience of the child “out into” the curriculum or organized bodies of knowledge- a process of reconstruction. Instruction or, as we may prefer to say

today, teaching or facilitation, assists the child as she or he moves from current experiences into new realms of experiences (p. 25).

The authors also noted that in Dewey's (1902) *The Child and the Curriculum* (as cited in Simpson and Jackson, 2003), Dewey encouraged interaction between the student and their environment. In the context of this research study, there were two types of "students;" teachers taking on the role of the student as they go through Collet's (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching process, and the elementary-age students, as they participated in individual conferences with their teachers. In further support of Dewey's learner-centered curriculum, Simpson and Jackson (2003) examined how curriculum is "used to interpret the child's tendencies and abilities" (p. 26) and can be used in order to guide the student, asserting that the student's experiences, the curriculum, and the student's resulting growth go hand in hand (Terwel, 1999).

Purpose Statement

With the emphasis on reading achievement comes a push for critical thinking, problem solving, metacognition, and collaboration. As a literacy coach and a member of Green Pond Primary School's leadership team, the researcher noticed that opportunities are not being maximized by teachers to engage students in critical thinking and inquiry. Using the workshop model daily to teach reading and writing, students in kindergarten through second grade received instruction from teachers in whole group, guided, and independent settings. The focus of this study examined the instruction that took place during the guided and independent settings of the reading and writing workshop models from a coaching perspective. The objective of these independent conferences was for

teachers to assess and extend students' knowledge through conversation, directing the conversation through intentional questioning. Therefore, the purpose of this study was twofold; the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model (Collet, 2008) was analyzed to determine its effectiveness in changing teacher practices, through the use of the Bloom's Taxonomy Table. Secondly, the motivating purpose of this study was to examine if utilizing the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model provided a means for improve student reading achievement. If teachers were coached to ask higher level questions more frequently, placing ownership of the learning on students, the results would be extension of student thinking and higher reading achievement.

Overview of Methodology

Action research allows a hands-on approach for the researcher, examining a topic of interest in which results would hold personal meaning, therefore potentially changing personal practice. This is in comparison to traditional educational research, in which the researcher is disconnected from the environment they are studying. Lending itself to a mixed methods approach, action research allows the researcher to gain insight to a problem from within, and the process of reflecting, collaborating, and forming relationships is invaluable, and includes benefits such as applying new skills in context, and sustained inquiry (Miller, 2016; Vaughan, Boerum, & Whitehead, 2019). The following provides a brief outline of the action research study that occurred.

Utilizing Creswell and Clark's (2011) process for developing a research study, as discussed further in Chapter Three, the researcher began by identifying the beliefs that drove her practice, which was the professional development for teachers must be *purposeful* and *intentional*, as adult learners bring their own experience and backgrounds

to their learning. With this belief in mind, the researcher chose a specific coaching model, Collet's Gradual Increase of Responsibility (2008), to address each teachers' specific needs and move them forward in their instruction.

In considering a methodological approach, a mixed methods design was deemed most appropriate, based on the instruments and tools used, as well as the data collected. Qualitative data included teacher surveys before and after the coaching intervention, as well as teacher interviews after the research. Through analysis of these interviews, themes were inductively coded with the help of another coach to ensure validity. Quantitative data included teacher questioning observations by the research in initial and final observations, analyzed and coded through discussion with the teacher to ensure validity.

Research Site Description

Green Pond Primary School serves approximately 850 students and includes three-year old kindergarten through second grade. The school houses three full day, three-year old classrooms, which are populated by students based on need. The school also houses eight universal four-year old classrooms, serving anyone who registers. The vast prekindergarten program serves as the primary intervention for all students. There are eight five-year old kindergarten classrooms, nine first grade classrooms, and eight second grade classrooms. There is a preschool disability class, serving a mixed population of resource students in grades preschool and kindergarten, as well as a half-day classroom for self-contained students; a full day self-contained classroom serving grades kindergarten through second, and a resource classroom serving first and second grades. Green Pond Primary School also houses two daycare rooms; one being an Early

Head Start program, based on need, and one being a Family Literacy program. It is here that students who have children while still in high school have childcare provided for them while completing their GED in-house.

The participants of this study included two kindergarten, one first grade, and two second grade teachers. While these teachers only accounted for three of the five grade levels in the school, these are primarily the grades to whom the researcher provided professional development most often. Participants in this study ranged from fifth year teachers to teachers with 20 plus years' experience, who held degrees ranging from bachelor's degrees to 30 hours beyond their master's degree. More details about the teacher participants will be provided in Chapter 3 of the dissertation. Teachers in grades kindergarten through second had daily opportunities to confer with students individually, through reading and writing workshops, as well as structured center time in kindergarten.

Data Collection

In order to answer the research question as the teacher-researcher, the researcher provided in-class professional development to five teachers, spanning from kindergarten through second grade. The job-embedded professional development utilized the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model (Collet, 2008), incorporating the various components of modeling, recommending, questioning, providing affirmation, and giving praise, through the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008), over the course of six weeks. The study utilized a mixed methods design. Schwandt (2007) noted the benefit of a mixed methods design, stating,

The notion has received considerable attention in the field of social and educational program evaluation, in which discussions unfold about mixing

methods at both ‘technical; levels (i.e., generating different kinds of data via different procedures) and ‘philosophical’ and ‘paradigmatic’ levels (p. 196).

This research study utilized a cyclical approach, using an average of eight, 45-minute initial observations for each teacher during reading or writing instruction as the first method of data collection.

Table 1.1 *Research Study Schedule*

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Teacher A	Initial Observation	Initial Observation	Coaching Intervention	Coaching Intervention	Final Observation	Final Observation
Teacher B	Initial Observation	Initial Observation	Coaching Intervention	Coaching Intervention	Final Observation	Final Observation
Teacher C	Initial Observation	Initial Observation	Coaching Intervention	Coaching Intervention	Final Observation	Final Observation
Teacher D	Initial Observation	Initial Observation	Coaching Intervention	Coaching Intervention	Final Observation	Final Observation
Teacher E	Initial Observation	Initial Observation	Coaching Intervention	Coaching Intervention	Final Observation	Final Observation

The quantitative data collection consisted of documenting teacher conferences with students, data denoting the level of questioning using the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy Table, as well as the frequency of questioning within each level. Results were used to plan and adjust the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) to meet each teacher’s specific needs. The final method of quantitative data collection during the coaching process was obtained from follow up observations in teacher classrooms, averaging eight 45-minute observations per teacher. Data from these observations was gathered to examine the levels and frequency of questions being asked during independent student conferences, and compared to the initial data set, to determine

if, through the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008), teaching questioning practices changed, both in level and frequency.

In addition to data collected through in-class observations and modeling, further data from pre- and post-surveys completed by teachers, as well as post-study interviews, were examined to determine from qualitative data the impact of the intervention. The use of multiple data points served as a means to determine the results of the study, further suggestions, and future courses of action.

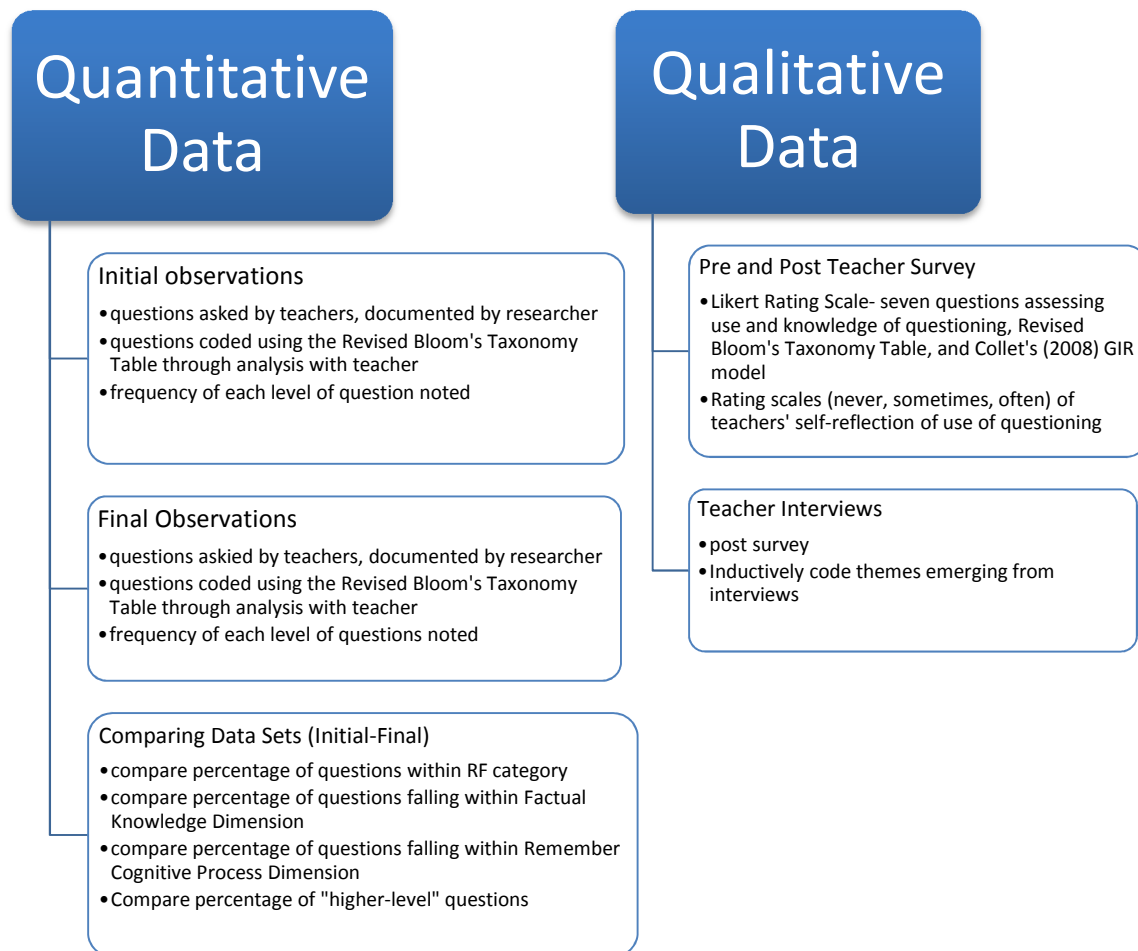


Figure 1.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

Significance of the Study

As Snow and Matthews (2016) noted, there is a lack of unconstrained skills taught in the early grades. These skills included vocabulary and grammar, story structure, explanations of texts, and seeking information from within texts. However, high stakes testing begins at the third-grade level, asking students to perform these skills, and decisions based on the results of the tests are being made at the state, district, and school levels. These assessments cannot be successfully accessed by students who struggled with reading, or even students who, while they may have a strong grasp of constrained skills, were lacking in unconstrained skills, such as vocabulary usage and comprehension. In her book, *Changes Over Time in Children's Literacy Development*, Marie Clay (2001) summarized her past research in her definition of literacy. "'Literacy' refers to either reading or writing activities considered separately or together" (p. 41). She then provided two "lenses" through which to view a child's literacy development. "Typically, progress is assessed by studying what teachers are teaching and measuring which parts of that the children are learning. The progress is measured by tests of letters, sounds, words, or graded texts or products in portfolios" (p. 42). The other consideration to observe literacy development mentioned is the "'literacy processing' view of progress during literacy acquisition. When we study how children work on texts as they read and write irrespective of how teachers are teaching, we arrive at a description of progress which is different" (p. 42). The purpose of the coaching intervention that took place was to model for teachers the use of critical questioning, in order to extend students' thinking in reading and writing. Critical questioning within independent student conferences focused specifically on story structure, descriptions and explanations of texts, in conjunction with

analyzing information found within texts. If the study proved to be successful, it would result in an increase in critical questioning and thinking in the early grades, this would, in turn, enhance students' critical thinking skills which students could apply on high stakes assessments and throughout their overall learning experience.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study primarily included sample size and the timeframe used to complete the research. There was only one researcher implementing the study, using five teacher participants. The study was completed using a convenience sample of teacher volunteers. The researcher had a prior working relationship with the five teacher participants, so teachers may have had a preconception of the researcher before beginning the study. While a positive teacher/coach working relationship is imperative, this could lead to potentially biased results. Due to the fact that first year teachers were excluded from consideration of the study due to the demands already placed on them, the study cannot speak to the effectiveness of the coaching model on beginning teachers' practice.

The timeline of this study also provides limitations. The study took place over the course of six weeks. While this is not an unreasonable amount of time for a coaching cycle, follow up to observe continuing practices, and any further coaching, was not included in the study. Due to the nature of these limitations, the results of the study are not generalizable.

Dissertation Overview

Chapter One of this dissertation introduced the reader to the Problem of Practice as identified by the researcher, the research question that evolved from this problem, and

the significance of this problem in its relation to social considerations. Chapter Two will provide the reader with an extensive discussion of the related literature by examining questioning strategies, cognitive levels, and coaching models, specifically, the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (Collet, 2008). Chapter Three will discuss the methodology behind the research study, the strategies that were implemented by the researcher to support teachers throughout the study, and the data collection and analysis process. Chapter Four of the DiP will further review data findings and analyses, and the significance of these in relation to the stated Problem of Practice. Finally, Chapter Five will present to the reader implications of this study and how the coaching model can be used in the future within the researcher's personal practice, as well as questioning strategies for use in the kindergarten through second grade classroom settings.

Key Words/Glossary

The following are terms used throughout the study, as defined by the researcher and literature.

Action Research- Systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders...to gather information about how their particular schools operate, in hopes of evoking positive change (Mills (2007), as cited in Mertler, 2014).

Coaching Cycle- Working in-depth with a teacher, or group of teachers, for six to nine weeks, to target a specific goal (Sweeney, 2010).

Conferring- A time when teachers meet with students, either individually or in small groups, to address specific teaching points and set goals for student learning.

Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (GIR)- Coined by Vicki S. Collet in 2008; used to scaffold coaching and levels of support to teachers, and includes modeling, making recommendations, asking questions, providing affirmation, and praising (Collet, 2012).

Higher-level Questions- Questions falling in the higher cognitive process and knowledge dimensions of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table.

Metacognition- Being aware of one's thinking and the process of one's thinking (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).

Primary Grades- The early grades in school, usually through third grade. However, in the context of this study, the school houses through second grade.

Questioning- Instructional cues provided by teachers towards students, provided both to evoke an answer or response and encourage student thinking (Cotton, 1988; Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table- A tool used to examine the levels at which students are performing. The Table includes both Cognitive Process and Knowledge Dimensions (Krathwohl, 2002).

School-Based Coach- An individual considered to be an expert in instructional practices who provides varying degrees of support to teachers (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).

Workshop Model- Students are first introduced to content as a whole group, in the form of a mini-lesson. Following this, students have time to work independently and in small, guided groups; both settings include teacher conferences used to refine skills and assess student progress. Many workshops conclude with a share time, in which students

share a skill they've practiced, a piece of work, or something they've learned (Calkins, 1994).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature was researched electronically and through professional texts, and deemed appropriate for this study as it related to the overarching research question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model as a coaching model effect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table? By reviewing current literature, the researcher increased her knowledge base in order to better mentor teachers and increase their knowledge of best practices in the classroom, and the implementation of the practices with fidelity in the classroom. This Review of Literature will outline the following five components: 1) Questioning as a Tool for Assessment and Teaching, 2) Theoretical Framework (Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model, Collet, 2008), 3) Conferencing, 4) Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, and 5) School-based Coaches.

Questioning as A Tool for Assessment and Teaching

Kathleen Cotton (1988) defined teacher questions "as instructional cues or stimuli that convey to students the content elements to be learned and directions for what they are to do and how they are to do it" (p. 1). The practice of teacher questioning to assess student knowledge is one that is not new to education; however, it is one which is constantly being researched and improved upon. Cotton (1988) discussed Socrates and the origins of classroom questioning, noting that many researchers remind readers that

questioning has a rather long and respected history as an effective teaching strategy. As the level of rigor for students continuously rises, teachers must examine their methods to not only meet state standards, but extend student learning, all while keeping students engaged. As Tofade, Elsner, and Haines (2013) noted, “Questions have long been used as a teaching tool by teachers and preceptors to assess student’s knowledge, promote comprehension, and stimulate critical thinking.... Using questions to teach is an age-old practice and has been the cornerstone of education for centuries” (p. 77). Although Supon and Wolf (1994) examined teacher questioning over 20 years ago, foundational research on the practice remains unchanged. Using a qualitative study, the authors answered questions about the practice of questioning that were raised during workshops, and discussed techniques to increase higher-order questioning, such as open-ended questions and conversations, and, at the same time, taking into consideration the ability and background of the learner. These eight questions included:

- 1) Should all children be asked a variety of question types, or should we try to match the “levels” with their abilities?
- 2) What are some good examples of methods utilizing higher-order questioning techniques?
- 3) How often should higher-level thinking questions be asked in a classroom?
- 4) How do you record information/collect data in regard to questioning?
- 5) How can a teacher become a good questioner?

- 6) How can questioning be most effective without making the student feel self-conscious about giving wrong answers?
- 7) What should a teacher do after asking “Are there any questions?” and students do not respond; or when faced with the scenario of trying to respond to every child who has a hand up?
- 8) How can teachers get their student teachers to ask more meaningful and critical types of questions? (Supon & Wolf, 1994, p. 2-9)

Extending this thinking, Wiggins and Wilbur (2015) provided criteria to teachers for evaluating questions, including stimulating thinking and inquiry, raising further questions, and sparking discussion and debate, all the while noting that student answers may change based on new student experiences and learning. Peterson and Taylor (2012) also posed questions to teachers to examine higher order questioning practices, focusing on ideas such as:

- The extent to which the teacher is engaging students in higher level talk and writing about text.
- Teacher evaluation of how higher order thinking fits into the reading curriculum.
- The opportunities that students of all levels are being given to talk and write at higher levels about texts they are reading.

Though almost twenty years apart, Supon and Wolf (1994) and Peterson and Taylor (2012) provided some of the same suggestions to teachers. Both suggested utilizing the help of colleagues to help reflect on the types of questions being asked during lessons;

preparing general prompts which allow students to elaborate on answers; and allowing students to ask their own questions to each other and the teacher (Supon & Wolf, 1994; Peterson & Taylor, 2012).

Questioning as assessment

Buoncristiani and Buoncristiani (2012) examined the metacognitive classroom, noting, “A classroom becomes thought filled when everyone in it is explicitly aware that *what goes on in one’s head is just as important as what is put down on paper*” (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012, p. 109). They go on to note that the purpose of questioning is not simply to evoke an answer, but to encourage student thinking. It is this idea that allows for questioning to be a tool for both teaching and assessing.

Buoncristiani and Buoncristiani (2012) discussed how questions can serve a very specific purpose, such as allowing for multiple answers, setting expectations, or engaging specific thinking skills. For this reason, teachers must use care in designing effective questions. To begin, teachers must themselves be clear about the content they will cover. Secondly, they must identify the types of cognitive thinking skills they want their students to display, and word their questions appropriately. Third, teachers must encourage students to elaborate on their thinking, in order to increase the complexity and depth of their answers. Finally, good questions should teach students the process of thinking, so that students apply the thinking to later scenarios.

Questioning as teaching

“One of the reasons that teachers tend to emphasize coverage of the material over engaged thinking is that they do not fully appreciate the role of questions in teaching

content” (Elder & Paul, 1998, p. 297). Too often, teachers ask questions that only lead to a “dead end” with students- in which one question begets only one answer.

Heritage and Heritage (2013) agreed that teachers should further student learning through questioning and the researchers sought to study which routines and interactional practices led to effective formative assessment. For this study, a total of two hours of student/teacher interactions were recorded from a fifth-grade writing classroom in a Los Angeles school. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed for interactions, specifically looking for teacher questioning in a one-on-one formative assessment. The teacher also recorded her reflection of the interactions. The authors used conversation analysis (CA) to organize and analyze interactions, namely focusing on action, meaning-making and understanding within each interaction. The fifth-grade classroom was comprised of 26 students, all of whom spoke native Spanish, and all qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. Writing instruction was delivered in a workshop setting. The teacher pre-determined students for conferences. The recorded interactions took place amid a lesson in the course of a unit on persuasive writing. “In the practice of formative assessment, students and teachers play distinctive but complementary roles. A central role for teachers in this process is to elicit data that can inform the direction of learning during its ongoing course” (Heritage & Heritage, 2013, p. 176). Using a non-threatening approach in student conferences, teachers treated students as collaborators, and focused on each student’s Zone of Proximal Development. While beginning each conference in a similar fashion, each individual conference showed that the students needed a much disparate focus from one another. Serravallo (2010) discussed the individual approaches she took in student conferring, as well. By being familiar with individual student needs,

the teacher can facilitate the conference and ask questions pertaining to those specific skills, encouraging the student to extend his or her thinking. Unlike the teacher in Heritage and Heritage's (2013) study, Serravallo chose to target a specific skill from the beginning of the conversation based on her knowledge of students' needs, rather than starting the conference with an open-end question.

Higher-order questioning

Higher-order questioning can be defined as "those which ask the student to mentally manipulate bits of information previously learned to create an answer or to support an answer with logically reasoned evidence" (Cotton, 1988, p. 3). Peterson and Taylor (2012) delved more into higher order questioning, specifically to accelerate students' growth in reading. The researchers posed the question, "How are students at all achievement levels being given opportunities to talk and write at a higher level about the texts they are reading? What else could be done to foster higher order thinking among diverse students?" (p. 296). After providing the readers with vignettes describing common exchanges during literacy instruction, the authors provided suggestions, including probing questions, dialogue between students, and grade level meetings to analyze student and observational data. The authors encouraged teacher modeling for students in how to produce a higher order response, including follow-up questioning.

Gilson, Little, Ruegg, and Bruce-Davis (2014) elaborated on follow-up questioning. The purpose of their study was to further investigate the use of higher-level questioning during individualized reading conferences in elementary classrooms. Taking into consideration the varying reading abilities which make up a typical elementary

classroom, the authors asserted that more should be understood about the role of questioning and the intent to challenge and support students' thinking.

Gilson, et al. (2014) found that teachers asked lower-level questions about story elements, and used higher-level questions to ask students to infer, justify, and explain opinions. Less frequently, teachers used higher-level questions to analyze author's style, background knowledge, and reading strategies. Gilson, et al (2014) concluded that teachers would benefit from professional development to further their understanding of follow-up question types and how to best utilize these questions around text interactions during conferences.

Conferring

Student conferences are just one component of the workshop model, which was popularized by Calkins (1994), yet their importance cannot be underestimated. Using the workshop model, content is first taught in a whole group mini-lesson, then students have time for independent and guided practice before coming back to share their learning. It is during this guided and independent practice time that the teacher meets with strategic small groups to teach targeted skills and uses independent student conferences to address specific points with individual students and set new goals for learning.

Classroom discourse

Discussion in the classroom, or classroom discourse, is not only a natural occurrence, but one which social context dictates (Bignell, 2012, Newell & Orton, 2018). Newell & Orton (2018) noted, "Whether the discourse is between teacher and student or between student and peers, talk is an essential component of developing student

understanding” (p. 96). The authors go on to discuss the idea that not only does conversation in the classroom allow students to communicate their thinking to others, but it allows them opportunities to develop their own understanding in the process. This is done by guiding student conversations with open questions, allowing for students to fully articulate their ideas when presenting them. Bignell (2012) introduced the reader to the difference between “word poverty” and “word affluence,” and the impact this had on a student’s participation within the curriculum. “Within the context of such a debate, the role and status that will be afforded to oracy within the new curriculum is of significant interest to educationalists” (Bignell, 2012, p. 48).

In Bignell’s (2012) study, she provided a meta-analysis of two approaches to classroom dialogue: Talk for Writing and Towards Dialogic Teaching. In doing so, Bignell hoped to identify the underlying ideological assumptions about the role and purpose of talk in the primary curriculum. While she concluded that neither program suggested that it is appropriate to use only one type of teacher talk to support student learning, she also discussed social implications of the programs, and of classroom discourse, in general. Students must be familiar with the social context in which conversation takes place, knowing conversational rules, such as turn taking, listening, etc.

In light of the social context that underlies classroom discourse, it is imperative that teachers know their students. Tovani (2011) pointed out that “emotional engagement drives cognitive engagement” (p. 30), and by asking students honest questions, she was able to know them on a more personal level. By caring about them first as students, Tovani (2011) noted that students then recognize their value as learners,

This connection allows us to both take risks. I can take the risk of bringing in compelling content while students are more willing to risk new learning.

Emotional engagement lets us both know that failure isn't followed by judgment or ridicule. Through talk and text, I build their trust and create a connection that allows me to move them toward deeper cognitive engagement.

When I know my students well, I am a better teacher (pp. 30-32).

By knowing students on a personal level, and as learners, the teacher can then dismiss any prior assumptions of social context they may bring into the interaction, which may unknowingly shape the conversation or hinder the students' eventual understanding. The dialogue between teacher and student can then take the form of instructional conferences, in both reading and writing.

Reading conferences

The goal of a reading conference is for the teacher to meet the child on his or her level in order to support, teach, and assess specific needs through conversation (Collins & Glover, 2015; Serravallo, 2010). Through the use of small-group and individual student conferences, teachers used notes in order to set goals from past conferences and encourage students towards meeting those goals.

A teacher may begin an independent conference by having the student read aloud an excerpt of the text he or she is currently reading. Of course, this is only necessary until the student reaches a certain level (approximately end of first grade/beginning of second), or if it is known that fluency or print work strategies (decoding unknown words) are a targeted skill of the student (Serravallo, 2010). If a teacher is conferring with

students who are not yet reading conventionally, their conversations “might very well be about supporting their independence and intentions so that they are more likely to put themselves into reading situations in which they’ll use the reading strategies that we’ve taught” (Collins & Glover, 2015, p. 101). It is important to note if the text the child is reading is familiar or unfamiliar, as well as the genre of the text (Collins & Glover, 2015). Although the teacher will learn more about the student as an individual throughout the conferring process, the teacher must go into the conference with an understanding of the child’s background knowledge, both socially and academically (Collins & Glover, 2015; Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009). By bringing an awareness of the student and the text to the conference, the teacher can assess the student’s needs, offer a teaching point, and leave the student with a target skill to work on, to be addressed in the next conference (Collins & Glover, 2015; Serravallo, 2010). Collins and Glover (2015) noted, “We can’t notice what language children use or how independent they are, nor can we help them move forward unless we are sitting beside them, watching and listening as they read” (p. 117).

Conference procedures

Costello (2014) and Macken (2018) both discussed very different approaches to conferring with students, yet both noted the undisputed power behind a student conference. Costello (2014), focusing more on comprehension, set a very specific structure to his conferences, for fear that “students would think reading conferences were a chat where we only discussed the book” (p. 44). The conferences were shaped using specific questions and strategies designed to develop comprehension. Some of these questions, found in Appendix A of Costello’s (2014) article, included:

- How did you decide to choose that book as your independent reading selection?
- What prior knowledge and/or experience(s) do you have that helped you in reading your book?
- What do you think will happen during this book?
- What reading strategies did you rely on when reading this book?
- Did you have to re-read any parts of the book to comprehend? (p. 53)

However, Costello (2014) notes that his conferences evolved over the course of his using them; they became less scripted, and he began to enter a conference with more flexibility, but with a goal in mind for the student. The number of conferences for each student also changed based on student need.

Another conference procedure, differing from Costello (2014), was set forth by Macken (2018). Macken (2018) presented the idea of a progress conferences, in which the teacher and student discusses the student's progress by showing the student clear evidence of his or her growth. Each conference had specific elements, including review, research, compliment, teaching point, and next steps.

Going through Macken's (2018) steps systematically, the teacher first reviewed student data before conferring with the student. This data could include conference notes and more and will result in the teacher choosing a piece from the student's prior level to share during the conference. The teacher then proceeded to the research element, in which he or she asked the student to perform from their independent level, noting any strategies or practices that were recently mastered since previous conferences. During

this time, Macken (2018) noted the importance of complimenting the student with specifics, providing examples of where the student used a new practice.

Following a compliment, the teacher provided a teaching point and next steps. Macken (2018) noted,

In the progress conference, the teaching point and the next steps merge. The teaching point in a conference typically reflects the need of the individual student. The progress conference is designed to support the student's view of self...prior to taking on more challenging work. Therefore, the teaching point becomes one that the teacher elicits from the student. The teacher is leading the student to an understanding of the strategies...The next step reinforces that understanding, bring it to a new level (p. 243).

While the structures and procedures of Costello's (2014) and Macken's (2018) conferences differ, both have a specific goal for the student, and purpose for the conference, when entering the conversation with the student.

Small group conferences

In a small-group setting, students have common goals and needs, and this can be addressed through a small-group mini-lesson (Serravallo, 2010). Serravallo (2010) began these conferences by "connecting and complimenting," stating,

In this first part of the lesson, I wanted to let them know what strategy we would be working on together, as well as give them a rationale for why I thought this would be a good strategy for them to work on. I couch this new learning inside

of a strength they've demonstrated. This shows them-and me- that they are ready for this new learning (pp. 137-138).

After initiating a small-group conference, the teacher must then introduce or review the portion of the text the children will be reading; in order to do so, it is imperative that the teacher be familiar with the text that the students are reading. After setting a purpose for their reading, the students' practice, and the teacher uses this time to work with the small-group students one-on-one, in an effort to scaffold the skill just taught (Serravallo, 2010). Serravallo (2010) pointed out, "...it's essential that I still see the children in the group as individuals" (p. 137).

Writing conferences

Just as reading conferences are conversations about texts being read, writing conferences are conversations about texts being written. Hawkins (2016) noted the dual benefit of writing conferences; not only do these conferences serve as a time for students to recognize and articulate individual learning and goals, and try out new writing techniques, but also serve as a formative assessment for the teacher. This "on-the-spot teaching" helped promote independence in young writers, as noted by Griffith (2014).

Writing conferences certainly signify a shift in practice- and thinking- for some teachers, who are more familiar with the traditional style of writing instruction, which includes more lecture and checklists to evaluate writing (Hawkins, 2016). "On the contrary, in a writing conference, teachers facilitate student learning through co-discovering the writing process with their students" (Hawkins, 2016, p. 9). Researchers agreed that within each conference, strengths should be noted, a specific teaching point

addressed, and a goal set for the student; teaching points and goals may not only be set from student conferences and interactions during lessons, but also by reviewing students' writing notebooks regularly (Griffith, 2014; Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Hawkins, 2016).

Teaching and assessing during conferences

The goal of any student conference is to assess where a student is and provide a teaching point or goal based upon that assessment in both reading and writing.

Reading. In regard to reading, Burkins and Yaris (2016) emphasized that “conferring protocols revolve around connecting, conversing (gathering formative assessment data), coaching, and celebrating” p. 107). The teachers’ use of anecdotal notes during this time is imperative; it is also crucial that this time not become too heavily instructional, as this tends to take students away from the practice of reading (Burkins & Yaris, 2016). The goal for teachers is to keep reading conferences conversational and informal, yet the teacher should take away “substantial information about students as readers” (Burkins & Yaris, 2016, p. 116). This is accomplished by asking specific and intentional questions and prompts, such as “What is this book making you think about?” The authors asserted, “Carefully crafted questions and prompts help us gather formative data without inadvertently impeding one of the main purposes of independent reading: authentic engagement with texts” (Burkins & Yaris, 2016, p. 117).

Writing. Writing conferences, in comparison, vary at different stages in the writing process. Serravallo (2014) provided various qualities for teachers to look for during not only different points of the writing process, but across different genres as well- narrative, informational, and opinion pieces. Within a writing conference, focus,

structure, elaboration, and conventions can all be assessed (Serravallo, 2014), although Griffith (2014) noted the importance of focusing on one specific skill when teaching.

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

In 1956, Benjamin S. Bloom, with the help of colleagues, published what is known today as the original "Bloom's Taxonomy" (Krathwohl, 2002). The purpose of the original taxonomy was to provide teachers with a "means of facilitating the exchange of test items among faculty at various universities in order to create banks of items, each measuring the same educational objective" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 212). The six categories which made up the cognitive domain were arranged into a hierarchy of sorts, ordered from simple to complex. Although originally conceived for university use, classroom teachers began using the Taxonomy as a tool to examine their own objectives and assessment items. Teachers found that the majority of lesson objectives and test questions fell within the *Knowledge* category, which included basic recall and memorization (Krathwohl, 2002). However, it is the categories that fall within the higher levels of the Taxonomy "that are usually considered the most important goals of education" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 213). Years later, the Taxonomy was revised, with two categories being reordered, and the names of all categories being changed to verb form for educator use.

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

The original Bloom's Taxonomy was revised in order to take into account updated curriculum theories and research. These new ideas focused on students' metacognition and self-regulated learning. Amer (2006) noted that the Revised Taxonomy had to "incorporate these new learner-centered paradigms into its structure"

(p. 215). In order to do so, the Revised Taxonomy included a shift from one dimension to two dimensions. These dimensions included the Knowledge Dimension and the Cognitive Process Dimension, which are categorized as nouns and verbs, respectively (Krathwohl, 2002; Amer, 2006).

Table 2.1. The Taxonomy Table

The Knowledge Dimension	The Cognitive Process Dimension					
	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyze	5. Evaluate	6. Create
A. Factual Knowledge						
B. Conceptual Knowledge						
C. Procedural Knowledge						
D. Metacognitive Knowledge						

Discussion of Knowledge and Cognitive Dimensions

With the revision of the original Bloom's Taxonomy came a shift in thinking about the Cognitive Process Dimensions, as well as the addition of the Knowledge Dimension. The addition of the Knowledge Dimension came about in response to the increase in research focused on student metacognition. This dimension included four categories; Factual Knowledge, Conceptual Knowledge, Procedural Knowledge, and Metacognitive Knowledge (Krathwohl, 2002; Amer, 2006). This is most easily thought of as moving from concrete to more abstract knowledge. The Factual Knowledge category

covers a basic knowledge of terminology and specific details; these are the basic components that students must know in order to have a grasp of content and solve basic problems. The Conceptual Knowledge category includes the knowledge of classifications, generalizations, and theories, and identifies the relationships among basic elements with an understanding of how they work together within a larger organization. Procedural Knowledge includes students exhibiting a knowledge of subject-specific skills, techniques, and methods, and displaying a knowledge of criteria for applying procedures. Procedural knowledge includes how a task is completed, methods of inquiry, and the measures for using these steps and skills. Finally, the Metacognitive Knowledge category involves knowledge and an awareness of one's thinking and learning. This includes strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, and self-knowledge (Krathwohl, 2002; Amer, 2006). The inclusion of the Metacognitive Knowledge category "provides a distinction that was not widely recognized at the time the original scheme was developed" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 214).

The Cognitive Process Dimension was a component of the original Bloom's Taxonomy in 1956. With the revision, the original number of categories remained, but there were noteworthy changes. All category names were presented in verb form, and the order was changed for two categories. Similar to the original Taxonomy, there is a seeming hierarchy to the categories, but "because the revision gives much greater weight to teacher usage, the requirement of a strict hierarchy has been relaxed to allow the categories to overlap one another" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 215). The Cognitive Process Dimension includes six categories; Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create. The Remember category includes retrieving knowledge from one's long-

term memory and consists of recognizing and recalling. The Understand category most clearly makes use of the overlapping of categories, as the category consists of interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining. This is all done by the learner in order to determine the meaning of a task. The Apply category involves employing a procedure in a given situation, and contains the verbs executing and implementing. In the Analyze category, differentiating, organizing, and attributing take place, as the learner must break apart material in order to examine how the parts relate to the overall structure. The Evaluate category includes checking and critiquing; the student must make judgments based on a given set of criteria. Finally, the Create category involves students putting components together to form a product. The Create process includes generating, planning, and producing (Krathwohl, 2002). Krathwohl (2002) noted,

Whereas the six major categories were given far more attention than the subcategories in the original Taxonomy, in the revision, the 19 specific cognitive processes within the six cognitive process categories receive the major emphasis. Indeed, the nature of the revision's six major categories emerges most clearly from the descriptions given the specific cognitive processes. Together, these processes characterize each category's breadth and depth (p. 214).

Taxonomy table and use

With the shift to two dimensions in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy came the implementation of a matrix that laid out all levels of cognitive processes (Noble, 2004). Krathwohl (2002) asserted,

In the revised Taxonomy, the fact that any objective would be represented in two dimensions immediately suggested the possibility of constructing a two-dimensional table, which we termed the Taxonomy Table. The knowledge dimension would form the vertical axis of the table, whereas the Cognitive Process dimension would form the horizontal axis (p. 215).

An example of the Taxonomy Table is found in Figure 2.1.

The Taxonomy Table is designed to analyze objectives presented to students. The use of two dimensions allowed educators to better align objectives, instruction, and assessments (Airasian & Miranda, 2002; Krathwohl, 2002). By analyzing the objective of the lesson and what it was asking the learner to do, the teacher was able to determine the cognitive process being used, as well as the knowledge process involved. Since the Table focused on student learning as opposed to performance, there was an emphasis placed on cognitive processes and the types of student knowledge required to master standards, rather than certain questions asked in standardized tests. Use of the Table also allowed for teachers to see gaps in objectives, instruction, and assessment, in order to improve upon these and extend student knowledge (Airasian & Miranda, 2002; Krathwohl, 2002).

Metacognitive thinking

Buoncrisiani and Buoncrisiani (2012) define metacognition as “an individual’s conscious thinking about cognition in a constructive manner, that is, thinking about our thought processes with the intention of understanding and improving them” (p. 7). In their text, *Developing Mindful Students, Skillful Thinkers, Thoughtful Schools*, Buoncrisiani and Bouncrisiani (2012) discussed metacognition in depth, noting the

intentions of metacognition (understanding, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation) and the implications on the thought process, as well as the objects of metacognition- content, cognition, and conduct.

The intentions of metacognition recognized the more developed stages of thinking, as well as the purpose of metacognition itself (Pintrich, 2002). Delving into these intentions showed an increase in sophistication of objectives. An understanding of metacognition suggested an awareness of one's thought process, and monitoring involved ensuring one's thinking was headed in the right direction (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012). In order to assess one's understanding and monitoring, Buoncristiani and Buoncristiani (2012) posed the following questions: "Are the results of the thinking reasonable? Is the right type of thinking being used? Are appropriate habits of mind exercised?" (p. 24). The metacognitive intention of evaluation examined how well one's thinking was progressing toward the objective. Finally, regulation of metacognition encompassed "adjusting the thought process to make sure the objective is attained and then reviewing the thinking and modifying the thought process so that it will be even more effective the next time it is used" (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012, p. 24).

Pintrich (2002) cited Flavell's (1979) article on metacognition, noting,

...metacognition included knowledge of strategy, task, and person variables. We represented this general framework in our categories by including students' knowledge of general strategies for learning and thinking and their knowledge of cognitive tasks as well as when and why to use these different strategies. Finally, we included knowledge about the self in relation to both cognitive and motivational components of performance (p. 220).

The objects of metacognition presented in the Buoncristiani and Buoncristiani's (2012) text posed three specific questions. To address the content of one's thoughts, one must ask, "What am I thinking about?" This included activating prior knowledge, learning a new concept, or problem solving. It is here that teachers not only monitored for understanding of a situation or concept, but also gauged progress towards an objective. When thinking about the cognitive skill being used, teachers must ask, "How should I think about it?" They must consider the type of thinking that is taking place, and the process (describing, evaluating, etc.) being used. When doing so, teachers ensured that the appropriate thinking skills were taking place, or guided student thinking in order to reach appropriate conclusions. Lastly, in considering the conduct of metacognition, individuals focused on the personal behaviors which support thinking, and asked, "What dispositions should I adopt while thinking?" while thinking, are learners using all available resources? Are there other behaviors that should be taking place? How would one behave if faced with a similar problem? (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).

Metacognition and Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

Pintrich (2002) noted the "basic distinction between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive control or self-regulatory processes parallels the two dimensions in our Taxonomy Table" (p. 219). In essence, the Taxonomy Table brought metacognition to the forefront of learning. Buoncristiani and Buoncristiani (2012) proposed, "But how can I comprehend anything if I am not able to analyze and evaluate my experiences and decide what is relevant and what is irrelevant?" (p. 104). By using the Table, teachers were able to see the alignment between cognitive tasks and objectives (or lack thereof), rather than simply viewing the Taxonomy as a developmental sequence children must go

through to learn. Further, the use of the Table allowed for students to activate prior knowledge by being exposed to higher-order cognitive skills (Pintrich, 2002; Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012). Pintrich (2002) summarized the link between metacognition and the Taxonomy Table:

...metacognitive control and self-regulatory processes are cognitive processes that learners use to monitor, control, and regulate their cognition and learning. As such, they fit under the six cognitive process categories and specific cognitive processes in the revised Taxonomy. The metacognitive and self-regulatory processes are well represented in tasks such as checking, planning, and generating. Accordingly, on the Knowledge dimension, Metacognitive Knowledge categories refer only to knowledge of cognitive strategies, not the actual use of those strategies (p. 220).

School-Based Coaching

In the school setting, an instructional coach is considered to be an expert in instructional practices who provides varying degrees of support to teachers (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). The role of coaching has changed over the years, as well as the services coaches provide, including providing whole staff and individual professional development, observing, modeling, and providing feedback (Dole, 2004; Killion & Harrison, 2006; Kise, 2006; Sweeney, 2011; Bean & Ippolito, 2016).

Evolution of school-based coaches

Most recently, the role of the reading coach has shifted from working directly with struggling students to providing training for teachers. This training may include

collaborating with the teachers to address struggling student needs (Dole, 2004; Sweeney, 2011). Initially, Title I of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) called for funding for compensatory reading education in schools. Since this time, Title I has become a funding source for schools in poverty. Over the course of this evolution, the “Title I teacher” was, many times, a reading specialist who worked with struggling students in a pull-out setting. Ultimately, this model led to little success, as students were not able to transfer skills back into the classroom setting (Dole, 2004).

In 2000, ESEA was revised and included three important components: all teachers should be highly qualified; reading instruction and programs should be researched-based; and informal assessment techniques should guide instruction and assist in the progress monitoring of students (Dole, 2004). It is here that the reading coach assisted, providing strategies and techniques, and training teachers in the most current, researched-based practices.

While the exact role of school-based coaches has been fluid and evolved as the needs of schools have changed, Dole (2004) noted that research consistently discussed the role that coaches play in professional development and support for teachers. Citing Joyce and Showers (1995), Dole (2004) examined potential support for teachers by coaches in the form of theory understanding, demonstration, practice, feedback, and in-class coaching. When combined, these forms of coaching showed a noteworthy increase in teacher knowledge and skills, and “the most significant increases occurred in the transfer of training to teachers’ daily instructional practice” (Dole, 2004, p. 465).

Roles of coaching

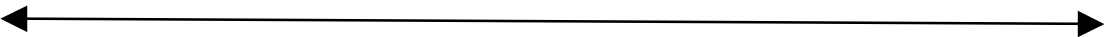
Killion and Harrison (2006) identified ten roles of school-based coaching. These roles included: resource provider; data coach; instructional specialist; curriculum specialist; classroom supporter; learning facilitator; mentor; school leader; catalyst for change; and learner (Killion & Harrison, 2006). They noted, however, that while these seem like, and can be, very distinct roles, many times coaches fill multiple roles at the same time.

In 2015, Hanover Research prepared a report entitled *Best Practices in Instructional Coaching* for Iowa Area Education Agencies. The purpose of this report was to provide an overview of best practices for instructional coaches. The report took the discussion of coaching roles even further by including coaching characteristics. Similar to Lyons' and Pinnell (2001), the discussion focused on the characteristics of adult learners, but also included understanding data, coaching cycles, instructional practices, and strong communication and leadership skills. The report was divided into two sections; effective practices for teacher coaching, and structural support for high-quality teacher coaching programs. Section I discussed the continuum of instructional coaching, ranging from consultative to directive, and established that coaching may also be collaborative, or inquiry based. The report provided samples of coaching cycles, centered on teacher needs, as well as discussion on student-centered coaching. All of the discussion included coaches being an active participant in the classroom and with both students and teachers. Section II suggested setting goals for coaches and teacher participants, as well as the school in its entirety (Hanover Research, 2015). The role of school leadership is discussed, and the idea that the reading/instructional coach should

not be evaluative is reinforced. A model is provided for the evaluation of the coach's impact, with a suggestion for looking at the product, the process, and the inputs (what was invested into the coaching program) (Hanover Research, 2015).

Student-Centered vs. Teacher-Centered Coaching. In order to understand the difference between student-centered and teacher-centered coaching, one must first understand the definition of each. Simply stated, student-centered coaching is about working collaboratively with teachers to set and achieve goals based on student needs; teacher-centered coaching is based on teacher need. It is imperative to realize, however, that the two can overlap, which is why Sweeney (2011) provided a continuum of student-centered and teacher-centered coaching, with coaching roles ranging from more to less impact on student learning. The continuum can be seen in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 A Continuum of Student-Centeredness in School-Based Coaching (Sweeney, 2011, p. 9).

More Impact on Student Learning		Less Impact on Student Learning
		
<i>Student-Centered Coaching</i>	<i>Teacher-Centered Coaching</i>	<i>Relationship-Driven Coaching</i>
Focus is on using data and student work to analyze student learning and collaborate to make informed decisions about instruction.	Focus is on what the teacher is or is not doing and addressing it through coaching.	Focus is on providing support to teachers in a way that doesn't challenge or threaten them.
District curricula or programs are viewed as tools for reaching student learning objectives.	Implementing a specific curriculum or program is viewed as the primary objective of the coaching.	District curricula or programs are a part of the conversation and are shared as possible resources for teachers.
Trusting, respectful, and collegial relationships are a necessary component for this type of teaching.	Trusting, respectful, and collegial relationships are a necessary component for this type of coaching.	Congenial relationships are more common for this type of coaching.

Coach is viewed as a partner that supports the teacher to meet his or her goals for students.	Coach is viewed as a person who is there to hold teachers accountable.	Coach is viewed as a friendly source of support.
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Beginning the coaching process with the end in mind, there is fluidity between teacher-centeredness and student-centeredness, as well as overlap, because oftentimes, a coach addresses a teacher need in hopes of increasing student achievement.

Coaching models

Essentially, teacher-centered coaching can be delivered either individually or to a group. When working with teachers one-on-one, coaches employ a variety of techniques- modeling, co-teaching, observing, questioning, and providing feedback (Dole, 2004; Killion & Harrison, 2006; Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Bean and Ippolito (2016) noted, “Working with individual teachers is the heart of coaching; it facilitates teachers’ professional learning in ways that help them become reflective problem solvers who address instructional dilemmas as design problems” (p. 91).

Likewise, coaching a group of teachers can lead to reflection and discussion (Kise, 2006; Bean & Ippolito, 2016). In fact, “by working effectively with groups of teachers, coaches can enhance and differentiate the coaching of individual teachers” (Bean & Ippolito, 2016, p. 115). Researchers agreed that coaching teachers in groups increases efficiency of professional development, and more quickly evoked change within a school (Killion & Harrison, 2006; Kise, 2006; Hanover Research, 2015; Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) examined literature reviewing coaching effectiveness in regard to pre-service and in-service teachers. Their research suggested two differing roles of coaching- supervisory and side-by-side. Peer coaching

could fall under either category, and both were more effective in an individual setting than a group setting.

Analysis of Coaching Studies

In 2011, McCollum, Hemmeter, and Hsieh examined the influence of skill-focused coaching. The study began by discussing emergent literacy and strategies which support this, as well as the effective professional development that comes in the form of coaching; specifically, skill-focused coaching. In order to implement the study, the researchers examined emergent literacy skills and grouped these skills into three categories for the purpose of coaching: book reading; phonological awareness and alphabetic principle; and print concepts and writing. McCollum et al. (2011) posed the following two research questions: Does coaching result in changes in teachers' use of target literacy teaching skills? Does coaching on specific literacy teaching skills result in changes in emergent literacy teaching environments?

This study included teachers from 13 classrooms, representing three different state-funded pre-kindergarten programs within one county. The classrooms were randomly assigned to receive coaching or to be a control group. Observations and checklists were utilized throughout the study. Data showed that, despite random assignment, intervention classrooms had higher pre-scores, but teachers receiving coaching continued to use a higher percentage of the skills they were being coached on. In regard to the second research question, no significant difference was found prior intervention in any of the observational checklists used (McCollum et al., 2014).

Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) examined coaching effectiveness through a meta-analysis. In their study, the authors conducted an extensive literature review to

determine the impact of coaching on changes in preservice and in-service teachers' implementation of evidence-based practices. Out of the 457 articles initially researched, only 13 fit into the criteria set by the authors in the context of the study. Most articles were excluded because of research design, measurement of the dependent variable, or low effect sizes.

Out of the 13 studies reviewed, a total of 110 teachers received coaching, with 37 of those being in-service teachers who taught preschool or elementary students. However, the nature of coaching provided to these teachers varied widely. Most studies included a combination of professional development sessions or course work, followed by individual coaching sessions. Other studies included observations followed up by coaching sessions. The total time spent coaching across studies ranged from several hours to 16 weeks.

The collection of studies provided strong evidence for the effectiveness of coaching in the use of evidence-based practices, both with in-service and pre-service teachers. The studies made points for observation and feedback, regardless of coaching model, as imperative to the coaching process; observation and feedback should take place in the context in which the teacher is most familiar.

Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (Collet, 2008)

The Gradual Increase of Responsibility (GIR) Model, coined by Vicki S. Collet in her 2008 presentation to the National Reading Council, has its underpinnings in Pearson and Gallagher's 1983 Gradual Release of Responsibility model. Using Collet's model, there is a change in coaching over time, moving from modeling, to making recommendations, to asking questions, to providing affirmation, to praising; coaches can

scaffold teachers towards independence in a particular practice (Collet, 2012). However, this is not a linear change; the level of support provided to the teacher by the coach is fluid, and dependent upon teacher need.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Pearson and Gallagher's 1983 Gradual Release of Responsibility Model allows teachers to instruct students, shifting the responsibility of performing a task from the teacher to the student. Buehl (2005), as cited in Fisher (2008), noted that the gradual release of responsibility "...emphasizes instruction that mentors students into becoming capable thinkers and learners when handling the tasks with which they have not yet developed expertise" (p. 1). Pearson and Gallagher's model included four components: focus lessons; guided instruction; collaborative learning; and independent work. There is a shift in language from "I do it," to "We do it," to "You do it together," and finally, "You do it alone" (Fisher, 2008).

Overview of the GIR Model

Shaped after the GIR Model, the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Coaching Model provided various phases of support to teachers in a structured sequence that allowed teachers to independently take over a specific skill or practice (Collet, 2012; Collet, 2014). The rationale behind this simply comes from the fact that teachers bring varying backgrounds and experience to their classroom, and their needs for support differ. The following discussion outlines the five phases within the model: modeling; recommending; asking questions; affirming; and praising.

Modeling. Modeling is the first phase of the GIR model, and one that provides the more supportive scaffold. Most effective when there is a specific focus, the coach's modeling is typically based on an observation to determine that focus. Modeling can take various forms, such as in-class modeling, video modeling, mentoring conversations, and sharing student work (Collet, 2014).

Recommending. "In addition to modeling, making recommendations is another way to provide 'something more'" (Collet, 2014, p. 10). During this phase, the coach is recognized as the expert, and provides suggestions to improve practice based on research and experience. The relationship between the coach and teacher is crucial during this phase, so that recommendations will be taken as suggestions and not criticisms (Sweeney, 2011; Collet, 2014; Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Collet (2014) emphasizes that for teachers needing a lot of support, recommendations will only be as effective as they are specific.

Asking questions. The third phase of the GIR model, asking questions, provides a less supportive scaffold, but one that can evoke higher-order thinking. "Questions can help teachers think flexibly about the choices they make as they design instruction, encouraging teachers to ponder present practices and discover new ways to think about their work" (Collet, 2014, p. 11). Further, good questioning techniques can stay with the teacher after the coaching cycle has ended, allowing them to examine other practices further. Questions may be asked during the coaching cycle to guide teachers' practices, or to making thinking more precise (Collet, 2014).

Affirming. Once questioning has taken place, and teachers have begun to think critically on their own about their practice, coaches can provide less support in the form of affirming. As the teachers' knowledge and confidence of an instructional practice

increases, they may still look to the coach for affirmation. “Mentors provide affirmation by confirming that practices are appropriate, by agreeing with teachers’ plans for instruction, and by using work samples or student data to validate the effectiveness of instruction” (Collet, 2014, p. 12).

Praising. The final phase of the GIR model is praise. The least supportive interaction between teacher and coach, it is one of the more meaningful phases, as the mentor or coach offers a praise as a genuine response to teacher success. This praise encourages teachers not only to continue with these practices, but also helps teachers reflect upon the practice when the praise is specific. “Praise that is focused on specific instructional actions enhances teachers’ motivation, self-esteem, and efficacy” (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000, as cited in Collet, 2014, p. 12).

Implementation of the GIR Model

Collet implemented her model in an attempt to examine the GIR model for teacher coaching. The researcher sought to better understand the coaching process, specifically examining the role that instructional support and feedback played in changing teachers’ practices. After discussing Pearson and Gallagher’s Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model, Collet applied and adapted the model to instructional coaches and their work with teachers. With the GRR model, students began to take ownership of their learning. In the GIR model, the coach scaffolds support so that the teachers can begin applying their learning and making decisions independently.

Collet implemented a mixed methods case study, which included three coaches, including the author/researcher, and 46 teachers. Data was initially collected through

observations, interviews, and artifacts such as email and lesson plans. An outside reader coded teacher comments, which matched the researcher's coding. While the coach was working with teachers, weekly checklists were completed to indicate which coaching techniques were used. The data was then analyzed to see how practices changed throughout the study. The data showed that the GIR model did, in fact, use intentional scaffolding, with more modeling taking place initially and then decreasing over time as teachers became more proficient. As coaches lessened their modeling, they provided feedback by making recommendations and asking questions. They then affirmed teachers' decisions and offered praise. With this model, the support that coaches provided changed in both quantity and quality, with modeling, recommending, questioning, and eventually, affirming, all decreasing over time, whereas praising increased over time. Figure 2.3 is a graph depicting the implementation of each phase, and Figure 2.4 is a graph depicting the frequency and point at which each phase was used. Using this model, teachers were able to become confident and independent when learning new techniques and practices. While the GIR model proved to be effective in this study, the study was limited to one clinic, and educators were tutors. The GIR was not researched in a school-based setting. Therefore, results cannot be generalized, and long-term effects have not yet been observed.

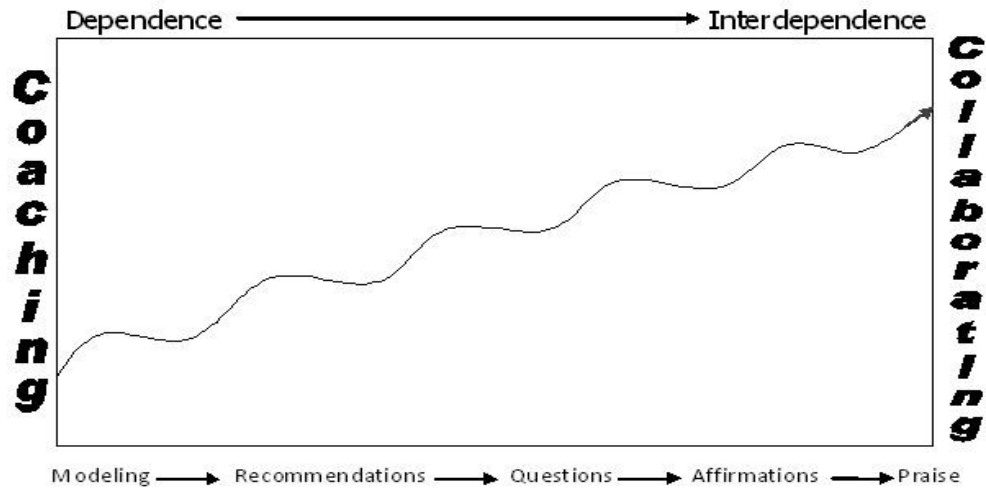


Figure 2.1 Gradual Increase of Responsibility: A Model for Coaching and Collaboration (Collet, 2012).

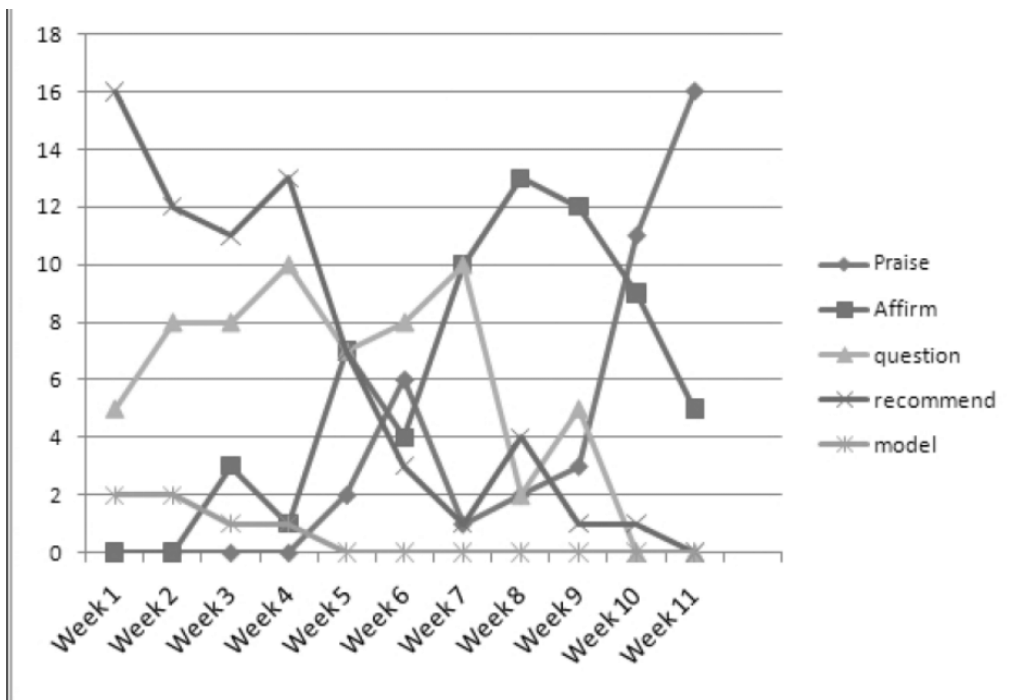


Figure 2.2 Changes in Coaching Practices Over Time (Collet, 2012).

Adult Learning Theories

Andragogy

The theory of andragogy was first used in 1833 by Alexander Kepp, then developed further and popularized by Malcolm Knowles in the 1980s, regarding adult education (Pappas, 2013). Within this theory, Knowles noted four characteristics of adult learners that differed than those of child learners, including self-concept, adult learner experience, readiness to learn, and orientation to learn. Beyond this, Knowles suggested four principles that apply to adult learning:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented (Kearsley, 2010).

Cox (2015) speaks to the natural link between instructional coaching and andragogy, asserting that the fact that the teacher sets the agenda for coaching based on his or her personal experience speaks directly to the theory. In addition, Cox (2015) notes,

Coaching is presented as the dialectic process that integrates experiences, concepts, and observations to facilitate understanding, provide direction, and support action and integration. The role of the facilitator or coach is therefore to

challenge existing assumptions to ensure learners are open to new learning (p. 30).

This affirms Knowles' assumptions of adult learners' experiences shaping their learning, as well as their readiness to learn.

Variables and Methods Within the Study

Within the context of this quantitative study, a number of variables were considered. Demographics of teachers were reported by years of experience teaching and degrees held. A pre-study Likert-type scale was administered to all teachers to measure their knowledge of questioning practices in regard to independent student conferencing. Observations in each classroom were recorded, and the number of questions asked during independent student conferences, as well as the level of these questions asked as identified by the Taxonomy Table, were noted and reported. After the implementation of the GIR model, another set of observations took place in each classroom, and conference conversations were recorded to receive post-study information regarding the level and frequency of questions asked. Finally, a Likert-type scale was given to all teacher participants to gauge their understanding of the coaching model, its' effectiveness, and their understanding of questioning practices in the context of independent student conferences. Additionally, interviews were conducted by the coach to provide understanding of teacher responses on the post-survey, as well as insight into the coaching process from the teachers' perspectives.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review was to increase the knowledge base of the research and the reader by defining the following broad concepts: questioning; conferencing; Revised Bloom's Taxonomy; coaching; and the GIR model. These concepts were taken from the proposed research question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model as a coaching model effect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table? These aforementioned concepts were broken down into specific categories in order to distinguish information specific to each. The underlying theories of adult learning and Constructivism, specifically, Vygotsky, Dewey, and the Learner Centered Ideology, were presented, which lay the groundwork for this study, and the methodology was summarized.

During this literature review, key concepts were defined and discussed, and studies were reviewed which showed evidence of effective coaching practices. While the only current study regarding Collet's (2008) GIR Model was one of her own, other studies (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; McCollum et al., 2011) discussed many of the components of Collet's model, including modeling, recommendations, and questioning. Additional studies (Supon & Wolf, 1994; Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Gilson et al., 2014) reviewed questioning techniques, as well as the use and effectiveness of questioning as both teaching and assessment tools. The studies and literature reviewed in the context of this study will contribute to the growing body of research on coaching effectiveness, specifically contributing to the very limited research on Collet's GIR model.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching tool and its implications on classroom teacher questioning practice. The study attempted to answer the guiding research question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table?

Research Design

Rationale

A mixed methods research design was used to conduct this research study. Creswell and Clark (2011) noted that "mixed methods researchers bring to their inquiry a worldview composed of beliefs and assumptions about knowledge that informs their study" (p. 39). This was the underlying principle that guided this action research project. In a design adapted from Crotty (1998), Creswell and Clark (2011) examined four levels for developing a research study. Those four levels included evaluating driving beliefs, theories that support those beliefs, determining a methodological approach, and establishing data collection methods.

In application to this research project, the researcher began with the beliefs that drive her practice. Throughout the researcher's reflection of her practice as a primary

school literacy coach, special attention is given to providing professional development that is *purposeful* and *intentional* for teachers. Ideally, coaching is provided to all teachers, regardless of experience level, yet in many instances, daily coaching tends to target new teachers or struggling teachers. This study focused, not only on improving the researcher's practice as a coach, but also helping all teachers, regardless of experience level, implement effective instructional practices. By adopting a specific coaching model, the Gradual Increase of Responsibility (Collet, 2008), the researcher was able to meet teachers where they were in terms of their current needs in the classroom, and model for them the direction that would best help their students.

Moving beyond driving beliefs, the researcher began to examine the theories behind adult learning; in this case, teacher education. In order to provide effective professional development to teachers in a way that is meaningful, one must be aware of the characteristics of adult learners. While all learners, both child and adult, bring background knowledge and experience to any learning situation, adults differ in the regard that the level of experience and knowledge they bring to a situation is much more advanced and developed (Friend and Cook, 2000; Lyons and Pinnell, 2001). Further, adults transfer new learning experience when their practice takes place in an authentic context, relates to their current experience, and they can actively take part in the practice (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Muñoz, Welsh, & Chaseley, 2018; Roumell, 2019).

This led to an examination of the constructivist theory, especially in relation to scaffolding learners. The constructivist theory of education has its basis in the experience that an individual draws upon, and recognizes that "personal perspectives are shaped and changed as we engage in cooperative social activity, conversation, and debate

with others around common purposes, concerns, and interests” (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, p. 4). Not only should teachers take an active and collaborative role in the professional development they are receiving, but learners should also take an active and collaborative role in their education; in regard to this study, the learners were the participants (teachers), while the “teacher” was the coach (researcher). The constructivist theory values that a shift in learner understanding will occur over time, as the learner reflects upon their thinking and practice. The theory also recognized that learners must be met where they are and should be provided with appropriate experiences to help them grow. The constructivist movement focused on the role which students take on while learning, which is one of active construction of knowledge (Terwel, 1999).

Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (“zo-ped”) recognized that learning is dependent upon the existing level of the child’s ability. “Vygotsky believed that, whereas scientific concepts work their way ‘down’ imposing their logic on the child, spontaneous concepts work their way ‘up,’ meeting the scientific concept and allowing the learner to accept its logic” (Fosnot & Perry, 1996, p. 20). The “zo-ped” varies from child to child and is directly reflective of the learner’s ability to understand the concept at hand (Fosnot & Perry, 1996). For this reason, Vygotsky urged schools to look at the process through which students approached and solved problems, as well as their collaboration and cooperation with their teacher. In fact, Vygotsky viewed language development as dependent on social interactions and saw this as a driving force in intellectual development (Buoncristiani & Buoncristiani, 2012).

After considering the beliefs and motivating theories of the researcher, the third level in developing the research project was to determine a methodological approach. A

mixed methods approach, specifically, an embedded design, was established as the most appropriate for this project, based on the instruments and tools used, as well as the data collected. The embedded design approach was determined to be most fitting, as both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching (n.d.) noted,

This design includes one phase of data collection in which priority is given to one approach that guides the project, while the other approach is embedded or nested into the project and provides a supporting role. The embedded approach is often addressing a different question than the primary research question (p. 1).

In this study, the qualitative data, as shown in Table 3.1 below, speaks to the effectiveness of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model (Collet, 2008). Supporting this data is the quantitative set, which shows the change in questioning practices of teachers as a result of the model.

Table 3.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Information

Type of Data	Instruments used	Timeline
Qualitative	Teacher surveys	Before and after intervention
	Teacher interview	After intervention
Quantitative	Question observations by researcher	During and after intervention

The researcher began with the use of initial surveys, gathering teacher educational background, as well as participants' knowledge and use of questioning in independent student conferences and their familiarity with the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model. The researcher then gathered quantitative data using frequency tables, examining the levels and frequency of questions asked by teachers during student conferences, according to the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table. While coding these

questions through discussions with the participating teachers, a plan was developed with each teacher to increase the level and frequency of their questioning during independent student conferences. This plan included goals for the teacher, shaping how the researcher would model practices. After the participating teacher received coaching from the researcher, through modeling, questioning, providing recommendations, affirming, and praising, the observed the teacher again. During this phase, the researcher gathered a second data set of questions asked, examined by level and frequency. Finally, the participants completed a post survey, which included their reflections on the coaching model and its usefulness during various phases, as well as reflections on their own practice.

The fourth, and final level of research study development included a discussion on the methods of data collection. For this project, the pre- and post- teacher surveys were developed by the researcher. This survey gathered information regarding teacher experience and educational background, as well as knowledge and use of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy table in the analysis of questions asked during conferences. Survey questions included:

Table 3.2 Pre- and Post- Teacher Rating Survey

How often do you...	Never/Almost never (0-1 time a week)	Sometimes (2-3 times a week)	Often (4-5 times a week)	I'm not sure what this is...
Use independent student conferences in reading?				
Use independent student conferences in writing?				
Use higher order questioning in				

reading conferences for <i>all</i> students?				
Use higher order questioning in writing conferences for <i>all</i> students?				

Using a Likert Scale rating of one through four, with one being the least and four being the most, teachers also answered the following questions in both the pre- and post-surveys.

- How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge of conducting independent student conferences in reading?
- How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge of conducting independent student conferences in writing?
- What is your knowledge of the Bloom's Taxonomy Table and its use of analyzing questions?
- How comfortable do you feel asking unplanned, higher-order questions?
- How comfortable are you being observed while teaching?
- How likely are you to participate in teacher-coach conversations regarding classroom observations and instruction?
- How familiar are you with the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Coaching Model?

The post-survey examined the participant's opinions on the coaching model itself, with focus given to the teachers' reflections on the change in their own questioning practice.

Teachers were asked specifically, "What helped you most during the process? If you feel

your questioning practiced changed, how so, and what led to that change? If you feel that it did not, why do you think that is?” Answers obtained from teachers were then inductively coded and the following themes emerged: Support for Teachers, Questioning of Students/Thinking Skills, Student Centered Instruction, and Teacher Awareness of Practices and Instruction.

Research Design Validity

In the recently adopted South Carolina state literacy standards (2015), there is a focus on students working in a classroom environment that is inquiry-based. Beginning in kindergarten, students should become insightful learners through personal interaction with the content, asking questions and reflecting on their learning. However, inquiry is not simply limited to literacy. Standard writers note that these standards should pervade all content areas, and should be reflected throughout the school, practiced by not only students, but teachers and administrators as well (South Carolina, 2015). The authors further assert that these standards go beyond an individual project or report and should be a constant part of the classroom learning environment. This is imperative in the realm of action research. If educators ask their students to use the inquiry process to “become curious, self-regulated, reflective learners,” (South Carolina, 2015, p. 8), should teachers not model the process? Teachers model thinking aloud during reading, multi-step math problems, and the Scientific Method; they should also be able to model the inquiry process, circling back to action research. Looking at the Inquiry Based Literacy Standards for South Carolina (2015), the reader can certainly view parallels between what educators are asking students to do, and what educators should do as action researchers.

- Formulate relevant, self-generated questions based on interests and/or needs that can be investigated.
- Transact with texts to formulate questions, propose explanations, and consider alternative views and multiple perspectives.
- Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.
- Synthesize integrated information to share learning and/or take action.
- Reflect throughout the inquiry process to assess metacognition, broaden understanding, and guide actions, both individually and collaboratively.

(South Carolina, 2015, p. 8)

The idea of inquiry also brings to mind Dewey's theory on curriculum. Dewey proposed that students play an integral role in curricular planning, as allowed by their personal experience. As Simpson and Jackson (2003) stated,

Worth noticing is Dewey's claim that "instruction" is "moving" from the present experience of the child "out into" the curriculum or organized bodies of knowledge—a process of reconstruction. Instruction or, as we may prefer to say today, teaching or facilitation, assists the child as she or he moves from current experiences into new realms of experiences (p. 25).

Mertler (2014) discussed a more in-depth view of the action research process. He examined the specific steps that were entailed in action research, and, while reviewing each step, brought to the attention of the reader some important points. One such point

discussed the organization of action research. Parsons and Brown (2002), as cited in Mertler (2014), note,

The key to worthwhile teacher-conducted action research rests in the questions addressed by the project and the extent to which the results are meaningful and important to *that* teacher and not necessarily in the means by which those results were realized (p. 39).

To summarize, action research includes the hands-on examination of a topic meaningful to the researcher, creating a much different approach (in theory) to that of a traditional researcher. Of course, some of the methodology and data analysis may seem to compare between the two types of research. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on the meaningful and personal aspect of action research. Just as educators are asking students to generate questions based on interest, and reflect throughout the inquiry process, they must do the same.

Context and Setting. The school in which the research study took place is a Title I school in a small, rural city in upstate South Carolina. The school is a primary school, serving grades pre-kindergarten through second grade, and is one of four schools total in the district- primary, elementary, middle, and high. The district is unique in the fact that it is a single attendance zone; there are no “feeder” schools, and students (with the exception of transient students) begin and finish their school careers together, often spanning 13 or more years.

The school serves a population with a 77.8% poverty index (South Carolina, 2016, p. 2). The school district itself is one of the largest employers in the community, as there are no other large industries to provide substantial economic support. However,

because of the small economy, many of the employees in the district live in neighboring districts, and drive into the city to teach. While it is the smallest district in its area in terms of population, it is the largest geographical district, covering many small, rural, unincorporated communities. The school district runs over 20 bus routes, and some students are picked up well before 6:30 am because of the geographical distance from their house to the school.

The student population of the school is 72% White, 15% African-American, 7% Hispanic, and 5% identify as two or more races. English as a Second Language (ESL) students make up 6% of the total student population at the school. Another 6% of the population receive educational supports in the form of resource or a self-contained special education classroom, while 20% of students receive speech services. The certified staff population at the school is 91% White, 7% African-American, and 2% identify as two or more races.

While in many areas, the school is a microcosm of the community it is in, this is not necessarily the case in this study. According to a 2015 report (DATAUSA), the poverty rate in of the city is 23.4%, with the median household income being \$35,389. However, it is easy to see why the schools have such a high poverty index, with average household incomes in Spartanburg County being \$43,907; South Carolina being \$45,483; and the United States being \$53,889 in 2015. The average household income is almost \$20,000 below the national average. Employment declined at a rate of -6.53% from 2014-2015, contributing to the poverty rate. While the demographic makeup of the city is 60.8% White, 29.9% African-American, 6.8% identify as two or more races, and 2.5% Hispanic, the poverty level is highest among Whites and African-Americans, making up

61.3% and 38.7% of the poverty level, respectively. Only 47.9% of citizens within the city own homes; well below the 2015 national average of 63.9% of Americans owning homes.

While the school itself does not necessarily represent a microcosm of the community, the community demographics certainly contribute to the social justice issues the school faces. The majority of students come from low socio-economic backgrounds, so this is, in fact, the largest social issue that the school encounters. Both the student population and the faculty are predominately white. There is one ESL teacher serving the entire district, and a translator is available for those families needing services.

Participants

The teachers who participated in this research study made up a convenience sample. The researcher focused her work primarily in grades kindergarten through second, so a total of 26 classroom teachers were considered for the study. Teachers who were in their first year of teaching were excluded because of the many demands and observations already taking place in these classrooms. The remaining teachers were given a description of the study, and those who were interested volunteered to participate. The final sample consisted of five teachers, spanning various educational years and background experiences. While the small sample size limited the results of the study from being generalized to other populations, it allowed for effective feedback to the researcher to use the coaching model further within the school.

Participant information. This study included five teacher participants.

- Teacher A is a Caucasian first-grade teacher with between 16- and 20-years' experience. She holds a master's degree plus 30 hours, is Nationally Board Certified, and is not currently working towards any other degree. She entered education as a second career and has spent her entire teaching career at Green Pond Primary School.
- Teacher B is a Caucasian kindergarten teacher with between 16- and 20-years' experience. This is her second year at Green Pond Primary School. She currently holds a bachelor's degree and is pursuing a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction.
- Teacher C is a Caucasian kindergarten teacher with over 21 years' experience. She holds a master's degree plus 30 hours, is Nationally Board Certified, and is not working towards any other degree. She has spent her entire teaching career at Green Pond Primary, as well as graduating from Green Pond schools.
- Teacher D is a Caucasian second-grade teacher with between 11- and 15-years' experience. While she began her teacher career in a larger neighboring district, she has taught at Green Pond Primary School for over ten years. She currently holds a master's degree and is pursuing an additional degree in Administration.
- Teacher E is a Caucasian second-grade teacher with between four- and six-years' experience. Her entire teaching career has been spent at Green Pond Primary School. She currently holds a bachelor's degree and is pursuing a master's degree in Counseling.

Researcher information. The researcher is currently in her thirteenth year in education. Along with certification in Special Education and Early Childhood Education, she holds a master's degree in Education and an Educational Specialist degree in Literacy. She has taught in a self-contained, Special Education setting and a first-grade setting, and is currently serving as the literacy coach of Green Pond Primary School. Her responsibilities include providing professional development opportunities for teachers, assisting in organizing and implementing the school's Response to Intervention (RtI) program, serving on the school's leadership team, school-wide testing coordinator, and analyzing data for instructional use.

Description of Intervention

In this context of this research study, the researcher provided a specific coaching model, Collet's (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility (GIR) model, as an intervention in targeted kindergarten, first-, and second-grade classrooms, during reading and writing workshop periods, while teachers were conducting small group and independent student conferences. In order to establish the effectiveness of the model as an intervention, data examining the level and frequency of questions asked by teachers to students was considered.

The GIR Model (Collet, 2008), used for as an intervention, included five phases: modeling, recommendations, questions, affirmations, and praise. This can be seen in Figure 3.1.

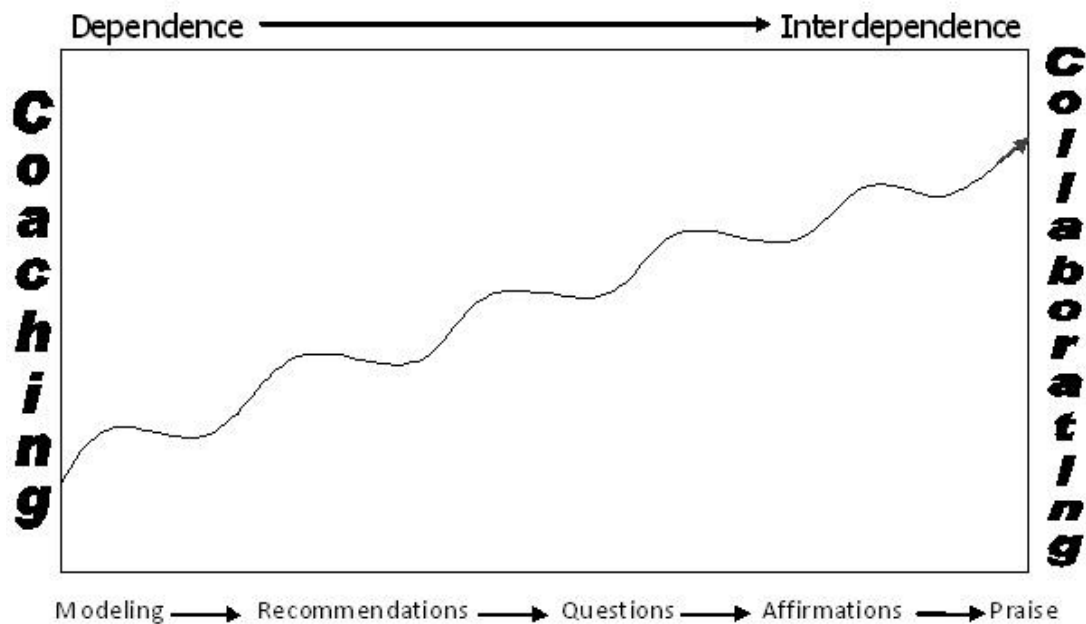


Figure 3.1 Gradual Increase of Responsibility: A Model for Coaching and Collaboration (Collet, 2012).

Before the intervention could take place, however, initial observations were conducted. The researcher observed in targeted classrooms for one to two weeks, in order to determine the level and frequency of questions asked by teachers during small group and independent student conferences, in reading or writing workshops. After these observations took place, the researcher met individually with each teacher to discuss the findings of initial observations. Through discussions with the teachers, questions were coded using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table. The levels and frequency of questions asked was discussed, and the teacher and researcher determined a goal for the teacher, noting at which cognitive and processing levels they would like their questioning to take place, as well examining the frequency of questioning. This discussion laid the

groundwork for the intervention, as the first phase, modeling, was designed specifically for each teacher, based on their goals and their current level of performance.

The first phase of the coaching model, modeling, took place after teacher/researcher conferences and goal setting. During the modeling phase, the researcher provided models for instruction through various forms. For a one- to two-week period, the researcher worked side-by-side with the teacher, and directly modeled questioning practices during independent student conferences in both reading and writing. This came about through the researcher teaching and the teacher observing, but also through the researcher and teacher co-teaching. Modeling was also provided using researcher created questioning prompts and other professional development tools targeted toward teacher need.

Throughout the intervention phase, the researcher and teachers formally and informally met to discuss recommendations and modeling provided by the researcher. The teachers would also ask for specific feedback and suggestions. Recommendations would take place in the classroom setting, during and after teachers conferred with students. One tool that aided in both the modeling and recommendation phases was a researcher created questioning chart, as shown in Table 3.3. This chart provided examples of both reading and writing questions for each level of the Bloom's Taxonomy Table, modeling the increase of difficulty in both the cognitive and knowledge dimensions.

Table 3.3 Researcher Created Example Questions Across Levels

The Cognitive Process Dimension						
	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyze	5. Evaluate	6. Create
A. Factual Knowledge	What goes at the beginning of a sentence?	What type of writing is this?	Correct the sentence with the right punctuation.	Choose a word, sentence, etc. during editing to fix.	How does this writing compare to your last piece?	Complete the writing process independently.

	List the parts of a book.	Who were the characters? What did they do?	Get your mouth ready to figure out the word.	How did the setting, characters, etc. change?	Were you right when you said _____?	Based on what you know, what could be a different title for the story?
B. Conceptual Knowledge	What types of punctuation go at the end of the sentence, and why do you put it there? What was the problem and how was it solved?	How do these reasons support the opinion? What prior knowledge did you use to support your prediction?	Use the dictionary to help you find misspelled words. Change one part of the story (character action, setting, etc.) and tell how it would affect the outcome.	Is there another word (synonym) you could use for that word? Compare details and determine which are the most relevant to the main idea.	Look at your entire piece. What was your purpose in writing? How do you know? Could the characters have solved the problem another way? Compare that to the way in the text.	Create your own list of synonyms to put in your writing folder. (Instead of happy- joyful, giddy, etc.) Create 2 more pages to this story, extending the ending in the book.
C. Procedural Knowledge	Which graphic organizer will you use for an opinion piece? What reading strategies can we use when we don't know a word?	Why do we need to revise and edit after we draft? Before we publish? What did we learn from our picture walk, and how does that help us predict what will happen?	How could you organize this story to help the reader understand it better? (transition words, etc.) Support your inference with evidence from the text.	Using the writing process, determine what steps this piece needs next. (a teacher provided piece). Use a Venn Diagram, compare and contrast the characters.	How did the editing and revising steps help your readers understand your writing better? Would you recommend this book to a friend who liked _____? Why or why not?	Create a poster that shows students why all of the steps of the writing process are important. Rewrite this story as a non-fiction text.
D. Metacognitive Knowledge	What are some ways you can think of things to write about? Recall something in the text that gave you a new idea.	How does the reader know that is your opinion? Rephrase the main idea into your own words.	How can you use words you already know to help you spell that word? How could this information be useful if you...? (reading a non-fiction book)	Explain how you chose which words to fix during editing. How does your prediction differ than your neighbor's?	Why did you choose to organize your writing this way? Evaluate the accuracy of your main idea and support it with text evidence.	Put together a writing notebook that shows how you have grown as a writer. What is your opinion of the character's actions based on what you know?

In order to scaffold teachers' practices, the third piece of the coaching model, questioning, created a seamless transition from recommendations. The researcher began posing questions to teachers during discussions, as opposed to making specific recommendations. The essential question that the researcher posed to the teachers, regardless of experience or level of students, was taken from Lucy Calkins *The Art of Teaching Writing* (1994); teachers should teach "the writer and not the writing. Our decisions must be guided by 'what might help this *writer*' rather than 'what my help this

writing” (p. 228) In the same regard, the researcher asked teachers to examine whether they were teaching the *reader* or the *reading*. Simply put, are the skills being taught by the teacher during the instructional conference helping the student to become a better reader or writer- are they skills that can be transferred to any other piece or text, or are they specific to the current piece of writing or text the child is using? The researcher would also ask teachers to explain their thinking and reasoning behind their questioning practices, in order to ensure understanding of modeling and recommendations.

As teachers grew in their confidence of questioning students, the researcher moved into the next component of the intervention, providing affirmation. This took place both verbally and written, with specific feedback in order to guide teachers. As Collet (2012) noted, “Affirmations denote a context in which teachers are making sound instructional decisions but are still looking to their coaches for confirmation that they are doing the right thing” (p. 19). This is similar to the final element of the intervention, offering praise. Collet (2012) discussed offering praise to teachers as a means to “enhance their feelings of efficacy by providing warranted praise” (p. 20).

It is important to note that the phases of the intervention process were not always linear. At times, researcher comments provided teachers with multiple types of feedback, such as recommendations and affirming, or modeling and questioning. This was the appeal of this model for use as an intervention; while phases were not always linear, the model provided a gradual increase of responsibility for teacher instruction, allowing the coach to scaffold support, or offer additional support, as needed, with the end goal of teacher responsibility.

Data Collection

Instruments and Methodology

Data collection instruments included pre- and post- teacher surveys, questioning recording sheets, and note documentation sheets, which were all created by the researcher. The only data collection instrument not created by the researcher was that of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy table, which was used to analyze the level and frequency of questions asked by teachers during independent student conferences.

Pre- and Post-Teacher Survey

The pre-survey provided to participants first gathered information on educator background and experience (years' experience and highest degree held). The survey then questioned teachers regarding their use of higher order questioning in reading and writing conferences with students. Finally, the survey collected information concerning the participants' knowledge of the key foci of the study, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table and Collet's Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model.

The post-survey questioned teachers again regarding their use of higher order questioning during small group and independent student conferences in both reading and writing. The post-survey also focused on the participants' opinions on the effectiveness of the coaching model implemented, and gathered input related to which supports provided by the coach were most helpful to them in invoking change in teaching practices. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix E.

Research Procedure

The research study was designed with the following factors as the primary focus: coaching models, teacher practice, and student conferences. The study has been divided into four stages, which are explained below. A table of the research plan and timeline is presented in Appendix C.

Planning. In the researcher's practice as a literacy coach, and with the recent state initiative of coaches providing job-embedded professional development (South Carolina, 2016, p. 3), her role has shifted to spend more time in the classroom and directly coach teachers. In researching how to best work with teachers to meet their specific needs, the researcher discovered the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008), which would allow her to scaffold her modeling to directly meet teachers' needs. Working daily with 26 teachers, whose experiences range from first year teachers to teachers with 20 plus years' experience, and with 44% of these teachers having advanced degrees, it is imperative that the researcher worked with teachers individually to best address their needs.

The researcher was constantly faced with the question, how could teachers make the most of student conferences, in the short time they had to meet with students? How could they assess student learning if they are only asking individual questions during conferences? Student conferences are used as assessment and teaching tools across Green Pond Primary School, starting in the three-year-old classrooms during Plan-Do-Review (Vogel, 2001). These conferences continue through kindergarten. Small group and individual reading and writing conferences also take place, beginning in many four-year-old classes, to extend students' learning and thinking. Affirming that teachers have

the desire to better themselves in this area, the researcher decided to make this her focus as a coach.

In order to best help teachers with questioning strategies, the researcher began to research levels of thinking and questioning strategies in the classroom. Krathwohl (2002) noted that when analyzing teacher-questioning practices, many teachers tend to ask surface level questions, oftentimes not moving past basic recall and memorization. Administration, along with the researcher, noticed this as a trend at Green Pond Primary School.

In the development of a research plan, the researcher first considered the data that was used to attempt to answer the research question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table? The study included kindergarten through second grade teachers, whom the researcher works most closely with. After obtaining district level and administrative consent, the researcher observed teacher and student conferences during reading and writing instruction in kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms. The conferences were then analyzed, and types of questions were coded, so that the levels and frequency of questions used could be recorded. Coding decisions took place through conferences with the participants, to ensure validity in coding results. This data was used to plan appropriate modeling, and the appropriate use of scaffolding within the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008). Subsequently, follow up observations and recordings took place. After analyzing these

conferences, the data set was compared to the initial data set to see if there was a change in teacher practice. Conference analysis sheets can be found in Appendix D.

Acting. In order to answer the proposed question as the teacher-researcher, the researcher provided in-class professional development to a convenience sample of kindergarten through second grade teachers, for a total of five teachers. This took place in the form of modeling, recommendations, and questioning, using the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008). The first method of data collection was conducted as an observation. Teacher conferences with students were recorded and analyzed, and the data gathered established the levels of questions asked, and the frequency of questioning within each level. Results were used to plan and adjust the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model to meet each teacher's specific needs.

The comparison set of data was obtained from follow up observations in teacher classrooms. Data from final conferences was gathered to examine the levels and frequency of questions being asked during independent student conferences, and compared to the initial data set, to determine if, using the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008), teaching questioning practices changed.

The researcher took various roles throughout the project, beginning as a passive observer during initial teacher observations. During the coaching phases which included modeling, questioning, affirming, and praising, the researcher took on the role of the active participant observer, as she was directly involved with the participants and their students. Finally, the researcher ended the project as a passive observer, analyzing questioning practices again.

Developing. After collecting and analyzing data from the study, the researcher determined what steps were needed to take next as a coach. Using the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a guide, the researcher developed an individual plan for each teacher, taking into consideration where they currently were with their questioning practices. This plan was reviewed with the teacher and consisted of questioning strategies to implement based on teacher and student needs, as well as a proposed timeline of scaffolding, depending upon initial reflection as to how much support the teacher needed. The plan was reflected upon daily during implementation, to determine if teacher needs were changing.

Question recording sheets were used during the study itself, as opposed to before or after. The question recording sheets were used during participant observations by the researcher, in order to document questions asked during independent student conferences. When meeting with participants after the initial set of observations, the researcher used the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy table (the only instrument that was not researcher-created) to code questions, ensuring validity through participant discussion and consensus.

Reflecting. After follow-up observations and analyzation of teacher conferences, the final data set was compared to the initial data set to determine if a change in teacher questioning practice took place. Meeting with each teacher individually, the researcher shared the results of the data, and welcomed any feedback the teacher took from the experience. From here, with the teacher and researcher, along with school administrators, further steps were determined for use of the coaching model.

When reflecting upon the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching tool, the researcher took into consideration the effectiveness of her modeling, as well as teacher feedback. If teachers felt that this was a useful model, this model would be considered to coach teachers in other areas.

Participant protection. All teacher surveys were anonymous when returned to the researcher. The results, when shared with school and district administration and other stakeholders, did not identify teacher participants. Teachers are referred to as Teacher A, B, C, D, and E.

Analysis of Data

Qualitative data from teacher surveys and interviews was analyzed by the researcher to determine the effectiveness of the coaching model. Teacher interviews were inductively coded with the assistance of another instructional coach to determine themes that common themes that emerged. Teacher survey questions will be analyzed based on the rating scales used by teachers to gauge their understanding and use of questioning practices. In examining quantitative data, the level and frequency of questions asked were examined through the lens of teacher experience. These questions were coded by the research and teacher through discussion to ensure validity. The level and frequency of questions asked in the initial observations were compared to those asked during the final observations to determine effectiveness of the coaching model.

Table 3.4 Analysis of data sources

Type of Data	Instruments used	Analysis of Data	Timeline
Qualitative	Teacher surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher reflection of use and knowledge of	Before and after intervention

		questioning practices, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, and coaching model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likert scales (4 point) and frequency rating (never, sometimes, often) 	
	Teacher interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher reflection on effectiveness of coaching model and various components • Teacher reflection on instructional practices • Inductive coding of themes 	After intervention
Quantitative	Question observations by researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of questions noted during initial and final observations • Questions analyzed to determine level based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy • Initial and Final observation data sets compared 	During and after intervention

Coding. Questions were coded based on the following table.

Table 3.5 Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table (Green & Johnson, 2010).

<i>Type of Knowledge Dimension</i>	Cognitive Process Dimension					
	Remember- retrieve knowledge from memory.	Understand- construct meaning from communications.	Apply- implement a procedure in a given situation.	Analyze- break material into its parts and determine how parts relate to one another and an overall structure.	Evaluate- make judgments based on criteria.	Create- bring elements together to form a new pattern or structure.
<i>A. Factual Knowledge- of basic elements</i>	RF	UF	ApF	AnF	EF	CF

<i>associated with a discipline.</i>						
<i>B. Conceptual Knowledge- or interrelationships among the basic elements within more complex structures.</i>	RC	UC	ApC	AnC	EC	CC
<i>C. Procedural Knowledge- of how to do something, skills, methods, techniques, used to do something and criteria for such and when to use such.</i>	RP	UP	ApP	AnP	EP	CP
<i>D. Meta-Cognitive Knowledge- of how to use cognition and self-awareness of one's own cognition.</i>	RMC	UMC	ApMC	AnMC	EMC	CMC

The coding abbreviations (RF, UF, ApF, etc.) (see Table 3.5 above) were developed by the researcher for use in analyzing and categorizing questions. During participant/researcher meetings, which took place after the first observation, each question was analyzed and discussed to determine its appropriate level of cognitive process and knowledge. Through this discussion, the participant and the researcher reached a consensus, ensuring validity.

Summary and Conclusion

With recent legislation in South Carolina calling for more meaningful professional development for teachers, specifically involving literacy, as well as the push for graduates to be more critically thinking, it is imperative that educators use the resources provided to help instruct our students. As a literacy coach, the researcher's job

is to be a resource for the teachers so that they can best serve their students. By researching questioning strategies and coaching models, the researcher expanded her knowledge base in order to best serve teachers, in the attempt to answer the overarching research question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table? Throughout this chapter, the reader has been given an overview of the study, followed by a detailed research design. The participants of the study were described, and data collection measures, instruments, and tools were discussed. If readers would like to replicate the study, the research procedure was described. Finally, data analysis was reviewed, including the coding analysis for questions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Problem of practice

Beginning in preschool, and continuing through second grade, small groups are utilized by teachers at Green Pond Primary School to teach and reinforce skills across all academic areas. Preschool through second grade teachers have also made use of independent conferences, through structured center play as well as reading and writing conferences. The purpose of these conferences was to assess and extend students' knowledge and critical thinking skills through conversation. While teachers frequently used these conferences to assess a student's knowledge and set a goal for growth, there were many missed opportunities for critical thinking, as questions were directed to basic recall and description. During these conferences, teachers needed to employ more questioning techniques, with close attention given to the levels of questions asked. This would have allowed for student achievement and potential to be maximized during this time of instruction. Capitalizing on this opportunity to extend each student's learning would...

Data collection methods

Qualitative data collection began with a teacher survey (APPENDIX E), which gathered information about the participants' educational background (discussed in Chapter Three), and also assessed their use and knowledge of questioning in student

conferences prior to the intervention. After the intervention was implemented, a post-survey (APPENDIX E) was administered, which asked teachers to reflect once again on their use and knowledge of questioning in student conferences. This was compared to the teachers' initial ratings, to determine any change in practices from the teachers' own perspectives. The quantitative data collection began when the researcher conducted initial observations in five classrooms, ranging from kindergarten to second grade. The researcher recorded questions asked during small group and individual conferences, then analyzed, coded, and discussed these questions with each teacher to ensure validity. Together, the teacher and researcher set goals for teacher questioning within conferences, based on researcher observation and student needs. The researcher and teacher also determined the level of support the teacher felt she needed- co-teaching/modeling, recommendations, questioning, affirmation, or praise- in the beginning of the intervention, and lasting for two weeks.

After the intervention took place, the researcher conducted a second set of observations, which mirrored the initial observations. The questions recorded from this set of observations were analyzed and coded, and the data derived was compared to the initial data sets. The conclusion of the research also included teacher interviews to allow the researcher to gain insight into which supports provided by the researcher were most beneficial to teachers.

General Findings/Results

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used to gather information for this study, as noted in Chapter Three in Table 3.1. Participants were those of a convenience sample, in which five volunteers took part in the intervention with

the researcher. Results of both qualitative and quantitative data are discussed in depth below.

Findings/results

The following are the findings of the survey administered to teachers before and after the coaching model was implemented. This survey asked teachers to examine their use of conferences and questioning of students in both the reading and writing settings.

Table 4.1 Pre- and Post- Teacher Rating Survey Results

Teacher	Use conferences in reading?		Use conferences in writing?		Use higher order questioning in reading for all students?		Use higher order questioning in writing for all students?	
	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
A (16-20 years' experience, National Board, Master's +30, First grade)	Often	Often	Often	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
B (21+ years' experience, National Board, Master's +30, Kindergarten)	Often	Often	Often	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
C (16-20 years' experience, Bachelor's degree, Kindergarten)	Often	Often	Often	Often	Never	Often	Sometimes	Often
D (11-15 years' experience, Master's degree, Second grade)	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
E (4-6 years' experience, Bachelor's degree, Second grade)	Never	Never	Sometimes	Often	Never	Sometimes	Never	Sometimes

The post-survey results almost mirror the pre-survey results. In only four cases did teachers feel their use of questioning increased; Teacher C felt she used higher order

questioning in reading for all students often, as opposed to answering “never” in the pre-survey. Teacher E felt she increased the frequency of questioning in writing, as well as used higher order questions in reading and writing more frequently than before.

However, “often” was considered the highest rating, denoting using a practice four to five times a week, and there were seven (out of 16) instance where the pre-survey was already rated as “often,” and remained the same for the post-survey.

When surveyed initially, it was observed that one teacher, Teacher E, felt she used conference and questioning significantly less than the other teachers. Out of the five teacher participants, the other teachers had significantly more teaching experience than Teacher E. The only other teacher who answered “Never” for a question (How often do you use higher order questioning in reading for all students?) was Teacher C, who, while having taught 16-20 years, does not hold an advanced degree, and has only taught at Green Pond Primary School for two years. Teachers A and B, who both hold National Board Teaching Certificates and master’s Degrees with an additional 30 hours, had identical responses, despite the fact they teach in different grade levels.

Post- surveys were provided to teachers before final data sets were given in order to receive unbiased reflections (i.e., teachers seeing data results and providing an answer based on those). When teachers analyzed data and saw initial and final data sets compared, teachers agreed that they “forgot what they answered in the survey the first time,” (Teacher C) and “even though I was trying to make a conscious effort, didn’t realize just how much their questioning had changed until I saw it in numbers” (Teacher A).

In determining teachers' comfort level with questioning and assessing their knowledge of conferring and questioning, teachers were given seven questions in which they rated themselves on a four-point Likert scale, with one being the least, and four being the most.

A table of teacher ratings is provided below for each question.

Table 4.2 Analysis of Q1 Survey Results

Q1: How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge of conducting student conferences in reading?			
Teacher	Pre-Survey Rating	Post-Survey Rating	Difference
A	3	4	+1
B	3	4	+1
C	4	4	0
D	2	3	+1
E	2	4	+2

In answering question one, four out of five teachers reported feeling more comfortable in their knowledge of conducting student conferences in reading. The teacher who reported no growth, Teacher C, with the most experience, already rated herself highest in the pre-survey, and her results remained consistent. Teacher E, who has the least experience of the five teachers, showed the largest increase in rating.

Table 4.3 Analysis of Q2 Survey Results

Q2: How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge of conducting student conferences in writing?			
Teacher	Pre-Survey Rating	Post-Survey Rating	Difference
A	3	4	+1
B	3	4	+1
C	3	4	+1
D	3	4	+1
E	2	3	+1

Question two asked teachers to rate their comfort level in conducting student conferences in writing. All teachers reported an increase in comfort levels, regardless of teacher experience or the area (reading or writing) in which the researcher provided coaching.

Table 4.4 Analysis of Q3 Survey Results

Q3: What is your knowledge of the Bloom's Taxonomy Table and its use of analyzing questions?			
Teacher	Pre-Survey Rating	Post-Survey Rating	Difference
A	3	2	-1
B	2	4	+2
C	2	3	+1
D	3	3	0
E	2	3	+1

Teachers' ratings in question three provided mixed results. Teacher A noted her knowledge of the Bloom's Taxonomy Table and its use actually lessened. When asked why, she explained to the researcher that while she was familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy, she was not aware of the second dimension (the Knowledge dimension) before the research project took place and felt like she needed more practice in order to use that independently when analyzing questions. This same sentiment was echoed by Teacher D, who reported no growth.

Table 4.5 Analysis of Q4 Survey Results

Q4: How comfortable do you feel asking unplanned, higher-order questions?			
Teacher	Pre-Survey Rating	Post-Survey Rating	Difference
A	3	3	0
B	2	4	+2
C	4	3	-1
D	4	2	-2
E	2	3	+1

When asked about providing higher-order questions to students that were unplanned, both Teachers C and D reported a lower rating post-intervention. These teachers noted that while they thought they were asking higher-order questions all along, after going through the intervention and learning about the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table, they felt they could push their questioning, but would need to plan these questions at first to ensure they were asking them, until they became a more natural practice.

Table 4.6 Analysis of Q5 Survey Results

Q5: How comfortable are you being observed while teaching?			
Teacher	Pre-Survey Rating	Post-Survey Rating	Difference
A	4	4	0
B	2	3	+1
C	4	4	0
D	3	3	0
E	3	4	+1

While the data for question five does not show much growth, two teachers, Teachers A and C, rated themselves 4 before the intervention took place, and remained a 4 after. No growth was shown, as they were already at the highest rating. Teacher D also reported no growth, although she had room for growth. When asked to explain, she noted that while she is “pretty comfortable” being observed while teaching, sometimes it is “a little unnerving because you never know how the children will respond when an outside adult is in the room.”

Table 4.7 Analysis of Q6 Survey Results

Q6: How likely are you to participate in teacher-coach conversations regarding classroom observations and instruction?			
Teacher	Pre-Survey Rating	Post-Survey Rating	Difference
A	4	4	0
B	3	4	+1
C	4	4	0
D	3	4	+1
E	4	4	0

When teachers were asked how likely they were to participate in teacher-coach conversations regarding observations and instruction, all teachers answered highest (4) in the post-survey; three of these teachers (Teachers A, C, and E) answered 4 in the pre-survey, and Teachers B and C showed an increase in their willingness to discuss observations and classroom instruction with a coach.

Table 4.8 Analysis of Q7 Survey Results

Q7: How familiar are you with the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model?			
Teacher	Pre-Survey Rating	Post-Survey Rating	Difference
A	3	4	+1
B	1	3	+2
C	4	4	0
D	3	3	0
E	3	3	0

Finally, when asked about their knowledge of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model, three teachers (Teachers C, D, and E) reported no increase in knowledge, although Teacher C already rated herself as a “4.” Teachers D and E noted that they tried to focus more on the practices the coach was assisting with, as opposed to the coaching model being used. Teacher B, with a growth of +2, stated that before the intervention, she “had never heard of the model,” but after taking part, she “saw how beneficial the scaffold was.”

In summary, similar to the results shown in Table 4.1, Teachers A and C (both of whom had the most experience- Teacher A having between 16- and 20-years’ experience and Teacher C having over 21 years’ experience) reported the least amount growth. Teacher A noted she knew less about the Bloom’s Taxonomy Table, as it was not what she thought it was when the research process began. She stated that she “didn’t realize there was another dimension,” and while it was helpful to go through the coding process with the researcher, she was unsure if she “could [code] on her own.” Her comfort of asking unplanned questions, being observed while teaching, and participating in teacher-coach conversations were unchanged; however, the two latter were already rated as a four.

Teacher C reported she felt less comfortable asking unplanned, higher order questions after the intervention took place. In conversation with the researcher, she noted, “I found that I used the materials a lot that you provided me. I think I will become more comfortable, but now, realizing what higher-order really looks like, I need a little more practice.” She had four questions which were rated four and remained a rating of four; comfort conducting reading conferences, comfort being observed, participating in teacher-coach conversations, and knowledge of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Coaching Model.

Teacher B reported an increase in her ratings for every question, which five out of seven questions being rated “most” in the post-survey. Teacher D increased her ratings in three out of seven questions; she remained constant in three out of seven questions. It was noted that Teacher D rated herself significantly lower on Q4 from the pre- to the post- survey. When asked why, she stated that she felt in reading it was easier, but writing, which was the area in which the researcher coached Teacher D, she realized that she “really had to think about higher-order questions and putting the learning back on students.” Finally, Teacher E reported higher ratings in five out of seven questions; she remained consistent in her ratings of Q6 and Q7.

After the intervention took place, in addition to completing post-surveys, each teacher was interviewed and asked, “What helped you the most during the process? If you feel your questioning practiced changed, how so, and what led to that change? If you feel that it did not, why do you think that is?” Teachers answered as follows:

Table 4.9 Post-Survey Teacher Interview Responses

Teacher A	The most helpful was just calling my attention to my questioning of students. Also, the materials provided to me. My practice has definitely change for the better.
Teacher B	<p>Having you in the classroom during small groups and guiding me with different ways to approach lessons/instruction, depending on the group. It helps when you “learn in the moment” instead of trying to think back to the lesson and remember.</p> <p>My questioning practices have changed. I feel more comfortable asking higher-order thinking questions without planning them.</p> <p>Also, I would walk through the book discussing the pictures and what was taking place, me doing the talking. I have learned through this process to give the book to the students and ask questions such as, “How do you know what the book will be about?” or “How can you figure it out?” Putting the responsibility on the students and letting them “teach.” It helps them use the strategies they have been learning.</p>
Teacher C	What helped me the most was the refresher in the higher-order of thinking timeline. Having examples of higher-level questions put new life in my conferences. Now as I do conferences, I am constantly thinking about how I can push this student to go higher in his/her thinking.
Teacher D	The charts/pages given to me to aide writing conferences and questioning. I’ve tried to be more aware of putting the work on them. It is a difficult adjustment, though, especially with certain students.
Teacher E	The resources provided were very helpful and the coaching during the small groups. The meetings after were also helpful. The way I think about conducting my small groups has changed a lot such as doing a picture walk and picking a focus.

To ensure validity, the researcher employed the assistance of another literacy coach to

determine themes found within the post-intervention interview, using inductive coding.

The following themes were determined and will be further discussed: Support for

Teachers, Questioning of Students/Thinking Skills, Student Centered Instruction, and

Teacher Awareness of Practices and Instruction.

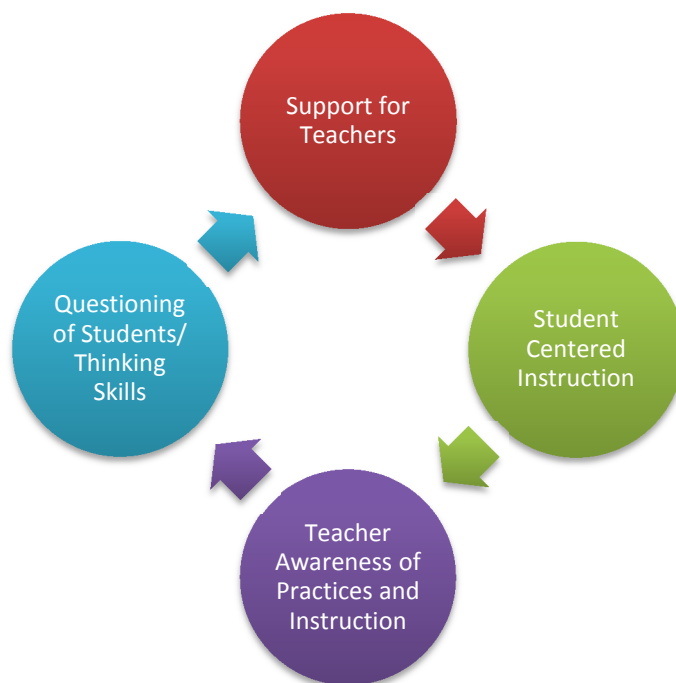


Figure 4.1 Emerging Themes

Support for Teachers. Not surprisingly, the support provided to teachers from the researcher was a resounding theme found in all teacher interviews. The coaching model itself focused specifically on the scaffold of these supports. The following charts (Tables 4.10-4.13) provide notes taken by the researcher as to the levels and types of supports offered to teachers during the intervention period. It is important to note that these supports were not linear and did not progress from one to the next; supports were offered as needed by the teacher and as observed by the researcher and varied daily.

Teacher A worked well with recommendations and questions from the researcher. Having 16 to 21 years' experience, she did not require much modeling in the form of co-teaching and felt comfortable using the resources and recommendations provided to her by the researcher. Teacher A noted that the most helpful support to her was the act of the researcher "calling attention to my questioning of students." She preferred to be affirmed

before going into a lesson, and then would execute the lesson with confidence. Having a very analytical personality, she appreciated conversation about teaching practices, and reflected well with the researcher presented her with questions.

Table 4.10 Teacher A Coaching Supports

	Modeling	Recommendations	Questions	Affirmations	Praise (verbal, notes, emails)
Teacher A	<p>Co-teaching</p> <p>Use of mentor texts- capitalization, sentence structure</p> <p>Strategy 1.12 (<i>The Writing Strategies Book</i>, Serravallo)</p> <p>Modeling questioning from researcher created chart</p>	<p>Strategy 5.1 (Pattern Books), 5.2 (Say, Sketch, Write) (<i>The Writing Strategies Book</i>, Serravallo)</p> <p>Strategy 6.3 (Speech Bubbles) (<i>The Writing Strategies Book</i>, Serravallo)</p> <p>Strategy 9.1 (Make Lines for Writing) (<i>The Writing Strategies Book</i>, Serravallo)</p> <p>Instead of asking students what needs to be capitalized, why don't you get them to teach you or another friend how to edit?</p> <p>Ask students: What is the most important thing you are trying to say? What do you want your reader to know or feel at the end of your piece?</p> <p>Ask students: What will change</p>	<p>Are you teaching the writer or the writing?</p> <p>How did your question help him with other pieces?</p> <p>How will you use that text to teach punctuation?</p> <p>How will you get students to transfer this?</p> <p>How can you put this learning back on the student?</p>	<p>Teacher chose mentor text for mini-lesson and asked researcher opinion, researcher affirmed.</p> <p>Teacher wrote a piece to have students edit and asked researcher her thoughts. Researcher affirmed teacher's plan and provided insight through questions.</p>	<p>You let the student figure that out instead of leading him with questions! That's exactly what we've talked about.</p> <p>Your effort is very obvious, and it is paying off. I've noticed students talking with each other about using mentor texts to help in their writing when they aren't with you.</p>

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After the initial observations, Teacher B noted that she would appreciate modeling and co-teaching by the researcher. The researcher modeled specific strategies for Teacher B when asked, in addition to skills the researcher felt Teacher B could benefit from. Although Teacher B had 16 to 21 years' experience, she was only in her second year at Green Pond Primary School. She embraced the supports offered and was eager to try new skills presented and practice the questioning that was modeled. When asked which support was most helpful, Teacher B remarked, "Having you in the classroom during small groups and guided me with different ways to approach lessons/instruction, depending on the group. It helps when you 'learn in the moment' instead of trying to think back to the lesson and remember." She frequently asked for affirmation after the lesson, but sometimes during the lesson as well, especially if she asked an unplanned question, or its students did not respond immediately. Teacher B's confidence continued to grow throughout the intervention, and she has continued to share classroom achievements long after the final observations.

Table 4.11 Teacher B Coaching Supports

	Modeling	Recommendations	Questions	Affirmations	Praise (verbal, notes, emails)
Teacher B	Co-teaching Modeling questioning from researcher created chart Modeling blending strategy for segmented words	<i>Who's Doing the Work</i> (Burkins & Yaris), pg. 84-85 Try letting the students lead the picture walk- not you. You will feel like you're doing less talking, and that's ok!	How do you feel like that went in regard to student comprehension? What was the difference between the first group and the second group?	As researcher began to scaffold co-teaching, teacher would ask for affirmation after picture walk and comprehension questions, specifically. Researcher	That was exactly what I meant when I said put the learning on the student! I can tell a big difference with that group- their comprehension was so much

	Modeled picture walk Modeled word attack strategies Modeled comprehension questions at end of text-going beyond the texts	I know these are younger students, but let's try to get them to think beyond the text. Right now, let's have them make connections. Ask students, even when they are right, "Are you right? How do you know?" to have them begin to self-monitor. Think about where the students are...not all students can make that connection yet. You may have to model for this group a little longer before you ask them to do that.	Are you teaching the reader, or the reading? Do you feel changing your approach help the students? How can this help the students as readers of any text, not just this one? How can you be more intentional with your book choice to support questioning?	would provide affirmation with specific feedback, "When you _____, I noticed the students _____, which is exactly what you wanted!" Teacher asked for affirmation with struggling groups more frequently than higher achieving groups; researcher asked questions and provided recommendations in addition to affirming.	deeper than the last book, just by you changing how you approached the picture walk. You've done a great job with planning for that group- I know that one is challenging. That was the perfect book choice to teach that skill!
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Teacher C, with over 21 years' experience, required very little modeling as a coaching support. The structure of her groups did not lend themselves to co-teaching, but she welcomed the researcher asking questions of the students. Teacher C immediately implemented recommendations after the researcher provided them and used questioning by the researcher as a tool to reflect upon her practice. Because she has taught the same grade level for over 21 years, she welcomed new ideas presented by the researcher, but appreciated when specific examples were offered; as she tried to adapt these to her students and groups, she would seek affirmation that her practices were effective. Teacher C noted that the recommendations provided, as well as "the refresher in the higher-order of thinking timeline," made the most difference in her practice.

Table 4.12 Teacher C Coaching Supports

	Modeling	Recommendations	Questions	Affirmations	Praise (verbal, notes, emails)
Teacher C	Modeled questions during various conferences	<p>Ask students: What do you notice about your work? Are there any ways you can think of to improve your work? What do you think you can start working on as a writer? (<i>The Literacy Teacher's Playbook</i>, Serravallo, p. 105)</p> <p>Ask students to examine their own writing before you read it with them. When you pause, they know a period should go there. Let them try to pick it out first.</p> <p>Writing Strategy 5.1 (Pattern Books), 5.2 (Say, Sketch, Write), 9.1 (Make Lines for Writing) (<i>The Writing Strategies Book</i>, Serravallo)</p>	<p>As kindergarten writers, what is your goal? How do students reach that?</p> <p>Are you teaching the writer, or the writing?</p> <p>How can you put that goal in the student's hand?</p> <p>How could students help each other?</p> <p>If you weren't in the room, would students be able to check their spelling, find words, etc.? How can we teach that?</p>	<p>Teacher had questions highlighted from researcher created chart and referred to them during conferences-asked for affirmation that she was using questions appropriately.</p> <p>Teacher asked if she was teaching writing strategy 5.1 (Pattern Books) effectively. Researcher provided affirmation.</p>	<p>When you asked her what her goal should be, she looked surprised! But you did a great job of taking her back to her writing and asking her what she noticed.</p> <p>Just by you asking students to look at their work at the front of their journal, they were able to pick out something they'd done well. That not only shows how far you've brought them, but also that they can evaluate their own work!</p>

Teacher D also required less modeling, but preferred a co-teaching approach, and appreciated the researcher conducting student conferences with her during writing, as well as modeling and suggesting questions. Teacher D asked the researcher many questions about specific students and conferences, both during co-teaching lessons and coaching conversations; in turn, the researcher used questions as the main coaching support for this teacher, having her reflect on her practices. Using questions as a support

for Teacher D proved to be successful in her reflections, as noted in conversations with the researcher, although Teacher D asserts the recommendations given to her were most helpful. Interestingly, Teacher D did not seek affirmation from the researcher often and presented herself confidently in student conferences before and after the coaching model was implemented.

Table 4.13 Teacher D Coaching Supports

	Modeling	Recommendations	Questions	Affirmations	Praise (verbal, notes, emails)
Teacher D	Modeled questions during various conferences Co-teaching	Writing Strategies 7.3 (Precise Nouns), 7.6 (Shades of Meaning), 8.15 (Read Your Writing Backwards) (<i>The Writing Strategies Book</i> , Serravallo) Ask students: Let's talk about some of the things you think you're good at as a writer. What do you think might be a good goal for you based on what we've noticed? What's going to make the biggest difference for you as a writer? (<i>The Literacy Teacher's Playbook</i> , Serravallo, p. 105) Why don't you model comparing two pieces you've written, thinking aloud about one piece- maybe capital letters or punctuation. Then, have the student help you evaluate a third piece.	What was your thinking behind this particular writing lesson? For that student, why did you determine that goal? Do you think he would have chosen a different one for himself? I know you're concerned about _____ who is struggling. What are some things we can do for him to allow him to take charge of his learning, even though he is still working on basic foundational skills? What would help you before you went into a conference to make sure you were prepared to ask higher questions? How do you feel it went	Teacher looked to researcher for affirmation after a conference with a struggling student. "I didn't feel like he was getting that at all!" Researcher assured teacher that she was doing a good job; some students may take more modeling of higher-level thinking than others. Researcher provided recommendations .	That conference was a great example of having students evaluate their own work. Then, you had them set their goal, instead of you doing it like last time. Thanks for trying that! I noticed you started to tell a student something, then you changed and asked them if there was anything else, they noticed about their writing. It took a minute, but they found it! That's just what I was talking about!

			when students chose their own goal?		
			Are you teaching the writer, or the writing?		

Teacher E had the least experience of all teachers in the intervention, having four to six years' experience. She felt that it was a combination of the recommendations and modeling provided by the researcher that made the most difference in her practice, but also noted, "the meetings after were also helpful." She would often ask questions about lessons modeled by the researcher and then implement observed strategies over the next few lessons she taught. After trying new questioning practices or instructional strategies, Teacher E sought feedback and affirmation. Teacher E often took notes and reflected upon recommendations and questions provided by the researcher and wanted to ensure she understood and was going to effectively implement a strategy practicing it with students.

Table 4.14 Teacher E Coaching Supports

	Modeling	Recommendations	Questions	Affirmations	Praise (verbal, notes, emails)
Teacher E	Modeling small group lessons Co-teaching during small groups	<i>Who's Doing the Work</i> (Burkins & Yaris), pg. 84-85 Instead of telling them to use ____ strategy to figure out the word, try asking them, "What can you do to figure that out?" You want to make sure that they can think through when to use what strategy. Ask students, even when they are right, "Are you right? How do you know?" to have them self-monitor.	What difference did you notice when students completed the picture walk without your prompting? Are you teaching the reader, or the reading? What would be your goal for ____? Why do you think she hasn't gotten there? If you could have her focus on one thing to get	Teacher shared lesson plans and sample questions with the researcher to ask for affirmation. Researcher assured teacher she was doing well. After a lesson with a small group, the teacher met with the researcher during her planning to ask if what the researcher observed was pushing the students	I can tell you felt like that didn't go well, but I was impressed with your questioning. You started with higher-level questions, and guided students' thinking in a way that didn't just lead them to the answer. It will take some time, but you're doing great! I can tell that student is starting to think through strategies...she looked at you and

		<p>Instead of going through each page during a picture walk, try handing students the book and asking them, “How can we get an idea of what the book is about before we read it? Show me.”</p> <p>If you notice a word in the text in this higher group that they may be able to decode easily, such as _____, but may be unsure of the meaning, stop and ask them if they knew what it meant, and how they knew, especially since they are reading above grade level.</p>	<p>there, what would it be? Let’s develop some questions for that.</p> <p>Instead of having this group read on their own and then read again with you, how could you structure your time with them differently to ensure and extend their understanding of the text?</p>	<p>appropriately, or if it was too hard. The researcher affirmed the questions the teacher asked and reminded her that this is a process that students are getting used to- thinking beyond the text.</p>	<p>told you which one she wanted to try, because another one didn’t work. You’ve done a good job of putting the responsibility of figuring things out on them.</p>
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Questioning of Students/Thinking Skills. Just as it was not surprising that support for teachers was a repeating theme among teacher interviews, it was also anticipated that the questioning of students and thinking skills would appear as a theme, as this was the focus of the RQ- to extend student thinking through questioning. Teachers noted that their questioning of students did drive instruction, and higher-order questions were beneficial in extending students thinking. Teacher C noted, “Having examples of higher-level questions put new life in my conferences. Now as I do conferences, I am constantly thinking about how I can push this child to go higher in his/her thinking.” Teachers B and D, both of whom focused on reading conferences, noted their questioning practices changed during their preview of a text, and picking a focus for students.

Student Centered Instruction. When asked in the post-intervention interview if questioning practices changed, all teachers agreed that their practices had changed, and

mentioned the benefit to their students. Teacher E noted, “The way I think about conducting my small groups has changed a lot, such as doing a picture walk and picking a focus.” Teachers E and D both stated their newfound intention of pushing the student in their thinking and putting the learning back on the student.

Teacher Awareness of Practices and Instruction. An unexpected theme that arose from the interviews was that of teacher awareness of their questioning practices. Although this was not a goal of the research, the use of questioning in the coaching supports offered to teachers resulted in teachers reflecting and becoming more aware of their practices. Teacher D noted, “I’ve tried to be more aware of putting the work on them [students].” Teacher A remarked that the researcher calling her attention to her questioning practices and making her aware was what was most beneficial to her practice, resulting in change. Teacher C also noted her mindfulness in conducting conferences now, in thinking about how each student’s potential can be maximized.

Charts of questions coded

The following charts are visual representations of questions asked by teachers. Each question asked in the initial and final observations was coded with the help of the teacher to ensure validity. The researcher used the Bloom’s Taxonomy Table, and created codes which indicated each type of question, and where the question fell in the Cognitive Process and Knowledge Dimensions. A separate table was used for each observation by each teacher; Teacher A had two tables- initial and final observations; Teacher B had two tables, and so on. After each question was coded, the frequency of the questions was determined, and questions were analyzed based on four criteria:

- Number of questions that fell within RF- These were questions within the Remember Cognitive Process Dimension and the Factual Knowledge Dimension. This is the most basic question asked, calling on students to answer with strict fact and recall.
- Number of questions that fell within RF, UF, ApF, AnF, EF, and CF- These were questions that fell within the Factual Knowledge Dimension. This is the most basic category of Knowledge, looking at the basic elements associated with a discipline. However, these questions could go beyond simple recall; students could be asked to Analyze or Evaluate an item, but not involve a higher Knowledge Dimension.
- Number of questions that fell within RF, RC, RP, and RMC- These were questions that fell within the Remember Cognitive Process Dimension, which is the most basic level of cognitive processing. While students could be asked a question about their meta-cognition, it would not go beyond basic remembering at this level.
- Number of questions that fell outside of Factual Knowledge and Remember Cognitive Processing Dimensions- These were any questions that go beyond the Factual Knowledge and Remember Cognitive Processing levels, and include the codes UC, ApC, AnC, EC, CC, UP, ApP, AnP, EP, CP, UMC, ApMC, AnMC, EMC, and CMC. For the purposes of the study, these were considered “higher-level questions.”

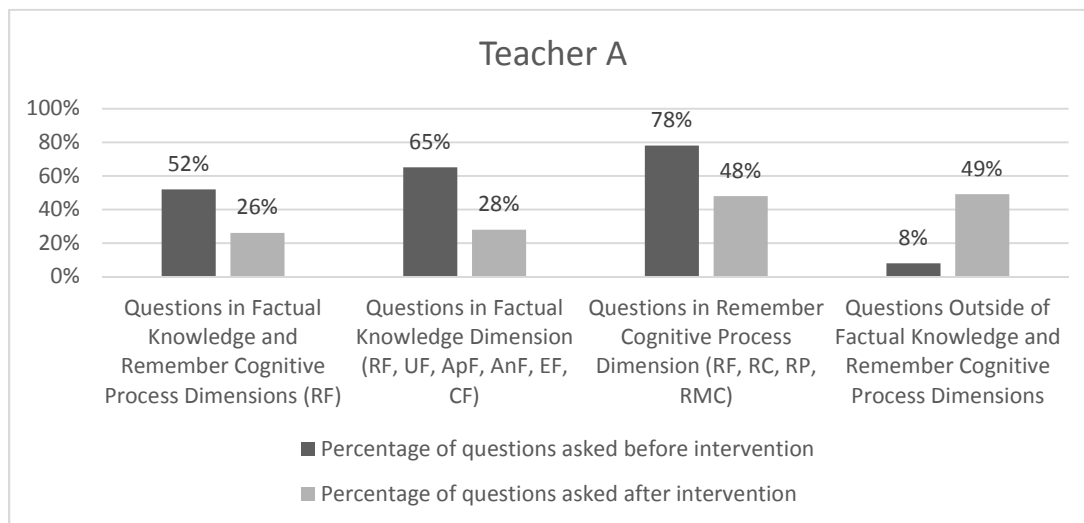
Questions were coded based on the following chart:

Table 4.15 Coding Analysis of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table

<i>Type of Knowledge Dimension</i>	<i>Cognitive Process Dimension</i>					
	Remember-retrieve knowledge from memory.	Understand-construct meaning from communications.	Apply-implement a procedure in a given situation.	Analyze-break material into its parts and determine how parts relate to one another and an overall structure.	Evaluate-make judgments based on criteria.	Create-bring elements together to form a new pattern or structure.
<i>A. Factual Knowledge- of basic elements associated with a discipline.</i>	RF	UF	ApF	AnF	EF	CF
<i>B. Conceptual Knowledge- or interrelationships among the basic elements within more complex structures.</i>	RC	UC	ApC	AnC	EC	CC
<i>C. Procedural Knowledge- of how to do something, skills, methods, techniques, used to do something and criteria for such and when to use such.</i>	RP	UP	ApP	AnP	EP	CP
<i>D. Meta-Cognitive Knowledge- of how to use cognition and self-awareness of one's own cognition.</i>	RMC	UMC	ApMC	AnMC	EMC	CMC

Teacher A showed a decrease in RF questions asked from initial to final observations, with 52% of questions in her initial observations falling within the most basic level, to 26% of her questions falling within the most basic level during final observations. Her questions falling within the Factual Knowledge Dimension also decreased, going from 65% to 28%, as well as her questions falling within the Remember Cognitive Process Dimension (78% to 48%). During her initial observations, only 8% of her questions were considered higher-level, compared to 49% in her final observations, showing a significant increase in higher-order questioning after the intervention took place.

Figure 4.2 Teacher A Question Analysis Comparison



Teacher B also showed a decrease in questioning in the RF category from initial to final observation. Questions falling in the Factual Knowledge Dimension decreased from 69% to 32%, and questions falling in the Remember Cognitive Process Dimension decreased from 56% to 35%. Teacher B increased her higher-level from 20% of questions asked in initial observations to 55% in final observations.

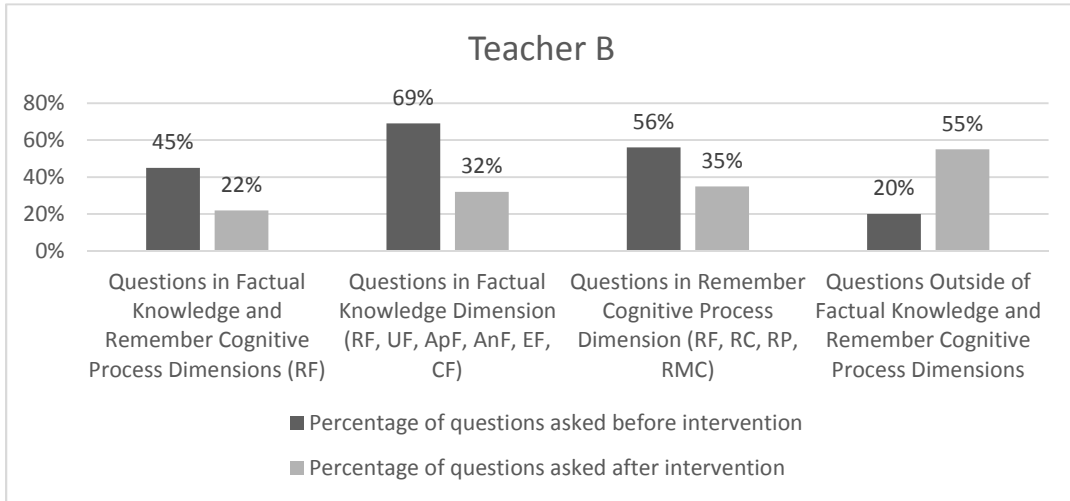


Figure 4.3 Teacher B Question Analysis Comparison

Teacher C also showed a significant overall change in questioning practices. Her questioning at the RF level decreased from 69% in initial observations to 31%. She also showed a decrease in questions falling within the Factual Knowledge Dimension, with questioning in this category moving from 83% to 39%, and a decrease in questions falling within the Remember Cognitive Process Dimension, moving from 83% to 44%. In initial observations, only 3% of Teacher C's questions were considered higher-level, compared to 54% in final observations, proving a significant increase in higher-order questioning in student conferences.

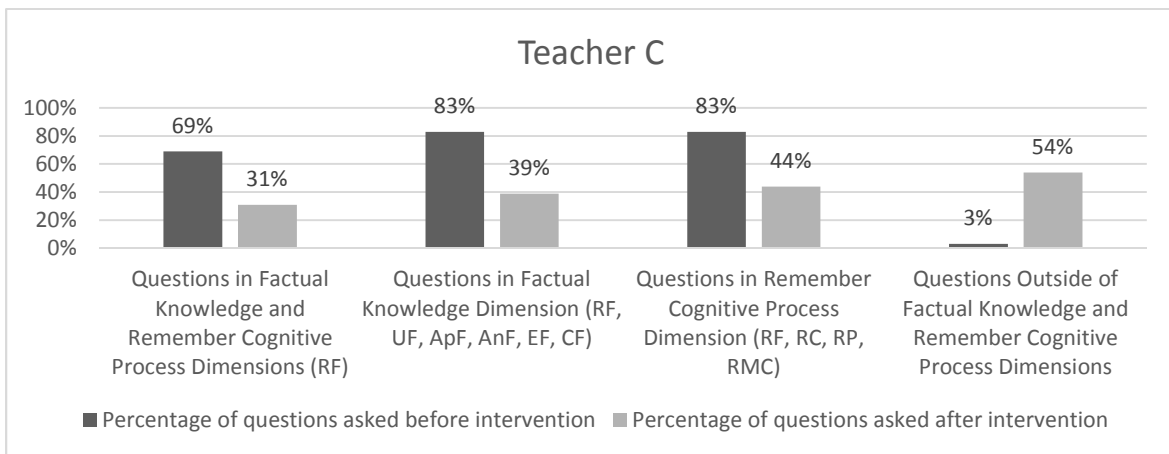


Figure 4.4 Teacher C Question Analysis Comparison

Teacher D showed a significant decrease of questions falling within the RF category, with 33% of questions in initial observations being RF, to 10% in final observations. Questions falling within the Factual Knowledge Dimension decreased from 39% to 19%, and questions within the Remember Cognitive Dimension also decreased from 54% to 27%. While Teacher D had the highest percentage of higher-level questions asked of any teacher during initial observations, with 40% of questions being higher-level, she showed an increase in higher-level questioning, with 65% of questions being higher-level during her final observations.

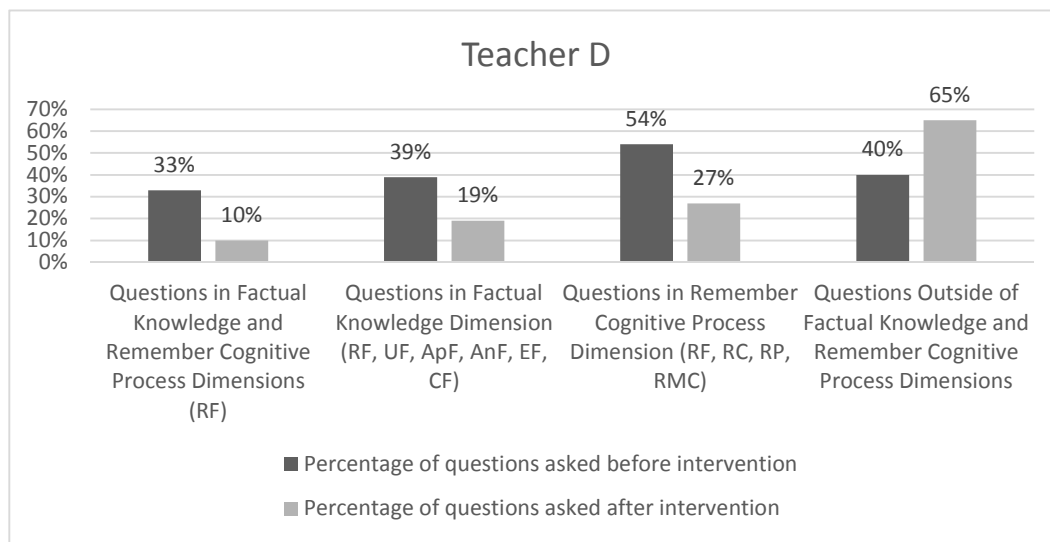


Figure 4.5 Teacher D Question Analysis Comparison

Similar to Teacher D, Teacher E showed a significant decrease in questions falling the RF category. During initial observations, 52% of Teacher E's questions fell within the RF category, and final observations showed this number 15%. She showed a significant decrease in questions falling within the Factual Knowledge Dimension (72% to 18%), and a decrease in questions falling within the Remember Cognitive Process Dimension (65% to 28%) from initial to final observations. During initial observations,

only 16% of questions asked to students were considered higher-level, compared to 69% of questions asked during final observations.

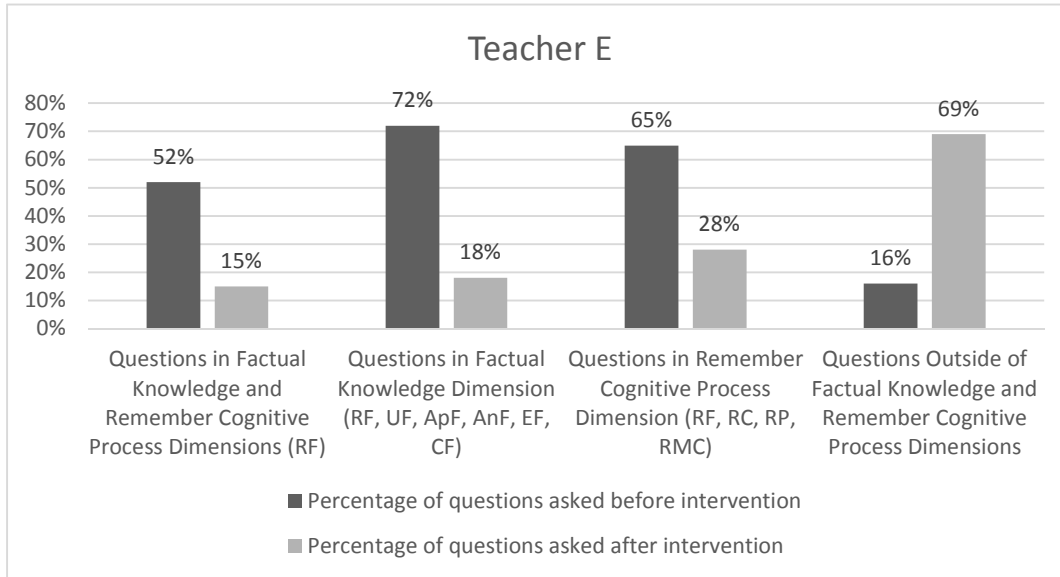


Figure 4.6 Teacher E Question Analysis Comparison

Table 4.16 Quantitative Summary of Teacher Questioning Data

Teacher	Time Period	Average number of questions per conference	Questions falling within most basic level of Cognitive Process and Knowledge Dimensions (Remember/Factual Knowledge)	Questions falling within Factual Knowledge Dimension (ranging from Remember to Create in Cognitive Process Dimension)	Questions falling within Remember Cognitive Process Dimension (ranging from Factual to Meta-Cognitive Knowledge)	Questions falling outside of the lowest levels in both the Cognitive Process and Knowledge Dimensions (ranging from Understanding to Create in Cognitive Process Dimensions and Conceptual to Meta-Cognitive Knowledge)
Teacher A	Before intervention	10	52%	65%	78%	8%
	After intervention	11	26%	28%	48%	49%
Teacher B	Before intervention	22	45%	69%	56%	20%
	After intervention	28	22%	32%	35%	55%

Teacher C	Before intervention	9	69%	83%	83%	3%
	After intervention	8	31%	39%	44%	54%
Teacher D	Before intervention	6	33%	39%	54%	40%
	After intervention	5	10%	19%	27%	65%
Teacher E	Before intervention	16	52%	72%	65%	16%
	After intervention	16	15%	18%	28%	69%

Implications

The results of this study proved to be beneficial in many ways for change at Green Pond Primary School, as well as any educational setting which employs the use of instructional coaches. The results provided data to support a formal coaching model for use in professional development. The study also offered the potential to increase student achievement and critical thinking across grade levels, as well as shift teacher thinking and practice in regard to questioning students and the use of conferring as an instructional model.

As a coaching model, Collet's (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model provides a framework for instructional coaches to use in all classrooms. While oftentimes, instructional coaches are used to support new and/or struggling teachers, the opportunity to advance experienced teachers' instructional practices is missed. The coaching model would, in all likelihood, vary in its levels of support for new or struggling teachers, but this is the benefit of the model- supports are scaffolded as needed, until the teacher reaches a level of confidence and independence with a practice. As the coaching model proved, teachers of any level (beginner or experienced) can transform their overall instructional practices with concentrated efforts and embedded

applications. With continued support provided by the coach in an authentic setting, teacher practices were changed, resulting in a formal model for job-embedded professional development.

One theme that emerged from teacher interviews is teacher awareness of their own instructional practices. However, it was the coaching scaffolds that provided assistance to teachers in evaluating and understanding their own instructional practices, specifically through the questioning and affirmations provided during teacher-coach conversations. In order to support teachers in their understanding, instructional leaders, such as coaches, should facilitate conversations that allow teachers to examine their practices and their effectiveness. Instructional leaders must be cognizant of the teaching methods taking place in the classroom, in order to best promote teacher awareness of beneficial practices.

Finally, schools and school districts must be strategic when thinking about the types of systems and structures that are needed to provide support for all teachers, regardless of background or experience. The opportunity to support experienced teachers must not be overlooked, all the while balancing the need to mentor beginning teachers. Schools and school districts must also be aware of the strengths of their instructional leaders, so that they may best provide supports to teachers and students. It is through this intentional system of support that districts will see the greatest impact on student achievement.

Summary

The purpose of this action research study was to attempt to answer the guiding research question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table? It was observed that while the frequency of questions asked was essentially unchanged, the levels of questions asked changed significantly.

When supported by the model outlined by Collet (2008), teachers noted a change in questioning practice during student conferences, which a shift towards higher level questions. Each teacher showed a decrease in lower-level questions, as well as a positive (try not to use the word significant as it has a specific meaning when it comes to research) increase in higher-level questions. When asked about the supports received, each teacher felt that the coaching supports provided by the researcher did, in fact, impact their questioning practice, which specific note given to modeling, recommendations, and questioning.

This study showed that Collet's (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model had significant impact on questioning practices in Green Pond Primary School classrooms. The impact was observed regardless of grade level or teacher experience. The researcher observed that although teachers with more experience tended to need less modeling, this was not always the case, as Teacher C, with 16 to 21 years' experience, requested modeling. Teacher C, in turn, had the highest increase in higher-level questioning from initial to final observations. The teacher that showed the most significant decrease in lower-level questioning was Teacher E; she noted that it was a

combination of modeling, recommendations, questioning, and affirmations through conversations that were the most helpful in changing her practice.

In conclusion, Collet's (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility coach model proved to be a beneficial support to teachers, no matter their grade or experience. The model is designed to take into account teacher background, and scaffold teachers from their current level of understanding and performance, and in this study, it was successful. The researcher was able to tailor her coaching supports to each teacher's specific needs, creating the most successful learning environment for them, and, in turn, teachers were able to significantly increase the levels of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences.

CHAPTER 5

ACTION PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE USE

Introduction

This action research study attempted to answer the question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table? The research study took place over the course of six weeks, with the implementation of the coaching model taking place over the course of two weeks.

After obtaining approval to conduct research from both the district and building level administrators, the researcher identified participants. All teachers teaching in grades kindergarten through second grade were considered, as these are the grades the researcher worked most closely with. First year teachers were excluded, due to the many demands and observations already taking place in their classrooms. All other teachers were given a description of the study, and those who were interested volunteered to participate, making up a convenience sample of five teachers, spanning various educational years and background experiences.

This sample of teachers were given a pre-study survey, asking educational background experiences, as well as assessing their use and knowledge of questioning during conferences, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table, and the Gradual Increase of Responsibility (Collet, 2008) coaching model. After completion of these surveys, the

researcher conduct classroom observations over the course of two weeks, and documented questions asked during small group and independent student conferences during reading or writing. After the initial observations, the researcher met with teachers to analyze each question, discussing each to ensure validity. It was during this time that the researcher and teacher made plans for coaching support, as well as goals for increasing levels of questioning.

After the researcher met with each teacher, and levels of coaching supports were determined, the researcher began the intervention, which took place over the course of two weeks. During this time, the researcher provided coaching supports for the teachers using the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008), in the forms of modeling, recommendations, questioning, affirmations, and praise. These supports took place not only during teacher instruction, but also during conversations between the teacher and researcher during planning periods and informal meetings.

Following the intervention, the researcher conducted final observations over the course of two weeks and documented questions asked during small group and independent student conferences. Before analyzing these questions with the teachers, the researcher asked teachers to complete the post-survey, which reassessed their use and knowledge of questioning during conferences, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table, and the Gradual Increase of Responsibility (Collet, 2008) coaching model, as well as asking teachers to take part in an interview answering the following questions: What helped you the most during the process? If you feel your questioning practice changed, how so, and what led to that change? If you feel that it did not, why do you think that is?

After completing the survey and interview, the research and teachers analyzed questions from the final set of observations and compared them to the first set of questions.

The researcher went on to conduct further data analysis, including comparing percentages of questions asked, looking at percent change in questions asked, comparing pre- and post- survey answers, and inductively coding themes emerging from teacher interviews, with the help of another coach, ensuring validity.

Research question

This study was completed using a mixed methods research design, specifically, an embedded design, to determine the impact of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model (Collet, 2008) on questioning practices in small group and independent student conferences, as analyzed by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table. The data gathered and overall results of the study will be provided to school administration and key stakeholders within the district in order to make decisions within the building in regard to the use and scheduling of instructional coaches.

The research question was: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table?

Overview of results

Analysis of data revealed significant impacts on questioning practices through the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model (Collet, 2008), regardless of teacher experience or grade level. While the frequency of questions asked from each teacher was comparable between initial and final observations, each teacher showed a

notable decrease of lower-level questions in final observations, as well as a notable increase of higher-level questions in final observations. Qualitative data revealed teachers' thoughts on the coaching supports to be positive, noting that their questioning practices were benefited. This was most noted in teacher interviews, as four common themes emerged: support of teachers, questioning of students/thinking skills, student centered learning, and teacher awareness of instructional practices.

In the pre- and post- survey questions, there was an overall increase in teachers' use and knowledge of questioning during conferences, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table, and the Gradual Increase of Responsibility (Collet, 2008) coaching model, as shown by a four-point Likert scale. However, the rating scale in which teachers assessed the frequency of their questioning, using "never," "sometimes," or "often," did not correlate with quantitative results. Further analysis and conversation with teachers determined this is due to two reasons. First, teachers remarked that they did not remember their answer from the pre-survey. Secondly, and having the most significant impact, the researcher provided the teachers with post-surveys immediately after final observations, but before analyzing questions from these observations with the teachers. When analyzing questions from final observations with teachers, all teachers were surprised at how significantly their questioning practiced had changed, and the number of higher-level questions they were asking, now out of habit. This speaks to the effectiveness of Collet's (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model.

Although the researcher was observing teachers to determine the effectiveness of the GIR model, student behaviors were also observed informally. The researcher noted that when teachers began asking higher order questions, which were more open-ended, or

asked students to take responsibility for their learning as opposed to the teacher walk them through a lesson, there was a shift in student behavior. Initially, students looked at the teacher, seemingly confused. When the teacher or researcher rephrased the question, or provided examples, the students would cautiously speak, unsure of what the teacher was looking for. However, as young children tend to do, the students adapted quickly, and soon understood that the teacher expected them to provide an answer and explain their thinking. Teacher B even noted in conversation with the researcher the level of comprehension the students showed after being asked higher order questions, simply because they had to think through the process of approaching a new text, rather than the teacher walking them through.

Action plan

The research findings will be shared with teachers, instructional coaches across the district, building level administrators, and district level administrators, as well as other interested stakeholders. Along with providing the results of the study to building level administrators, the researcher will also provide a plan for professional development across grade levels. The professional development will include the key components listed below.

- Initially, all teachers will be provided training on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table and given examples of questions and learning objectives that fall within each category of the table.
- Teachers will be guided in the generation of their own questions, for use in their individual classrooms.

- The researcher will provide videoed lessons to teachers teaching an actual lesson and questioning students.
- Teachers will also be provided with instructional videos online.

After an overview of the questioning levels is provided to all teachers, the researcher will work with the administrative team in determining which classrooms to begin implementation of the coaching model to increase higher-order questioning practices. More than likely, the model will be implemented in second grade classrooms first, as this is the grade level in which testing data is looked at most closely. The researcher will provide further professional development regarding questioning to the grade level as a whole, then begin initial observations in classrooms. Based on test data, administration may determine the need for math coaching in some classrooms as opposed to coaching in literacy practices but questioning professional development will still be beneficial. The coaching scaffolds will be put into place, as well as continued follow up with teachers from the study to ensure questioning practices are still in place and effective.

The results of this study will also be used in determining teacher needs across the district. The researcher, after sharing the results with district administration and stakeholders, will provide an overview and training of the coaching model to the other instructional coaches in the district and allow for observations to take place of coaching scaffolds. Other instructional coaches can then utilize the model to address needs in their respective buildings. Due to the small number of participants and short time frame of the study, it cannot be generalized, but the researcher will recommend that it serve as a model and resource for future coaching opportunities.

Many times, instructional coaching is directed towards new or struggling teachers. However, experienced teachers often need “refreshers” in skills or new practices, and have the motivation to better their practice, but may not be able to do so alone. It is in this case that an outside observer, an instructional coach, may prove to be beneficial. Collet’s (2008) coaching model is designed to coach teachers, no matter their level, by supporting them based on their level of need, knowledge, and experience, making this model beneficial for both new and experienced teachers.

Finally, the results of this study can have impacts much further than literacy practices at Green Pond Primary School. Instructional coaches are common figures at many schools, not only in neighboring districts, but statewide. The results of this study can be shared with other instructional leaders, in hopes of providing them with a practical and effective coaching model to implement in schools. The systematic layout, as well as the advantages of a model that can be used with any teacher, regardless of background or experience, makes Collet’s (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model appealing to instructional leaders hoping to evoke positive change in teacher practices.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

This research study included a small convenience sample of five teachers, spanning grades kindergarten through second. Due to the small sample size, the study and its results are not generalizable. However, because of the nature of the model, which provides continuous coaching support across multiple weeks, a coach would not be able to provide effective support to a greater number of teachers than this at one time. To further study the effectiveness of the model, research could take place on a larger scale, with a coach providing support to an entire grade level, if they are undertaking a new

practice. This would allow for teachers to not only meet and discuss practices with the coach, but with grade level colleagues as well. Implications for future research include:

1) The use and implementation of coaching models can possibly aid teachers in understanding the depth of learning taking place during instruction. 2) Supports, such as modeling, questioning, and providing recommendations could take place in both individual classrooms and group settings, allowing for an additional level of discussion and reflection to take place. This supports the adult learning theory in which learners bring their own knowledge and levels of understanding to any new project and are engaged in meaningful and authentic contexts.

The adult learning theory of andragogy notes the level of experience that one brings to their learning as crucial, and shaping their resulting growth. This was certainly true throughout this research study in the levels of support provided to various teachers. Teacher B, who had between 16-20 years' experience, was only in her second year at Green Pond Primary School, and requested much modeling and co-teaching, the highest levels of coaching support. Teacher E, who had the least experience of all teachers, also required high levels of support, found in modeling, suggestions, and questioning. However, teachers A, C, and D, all of whom had over ten years of experience in their same role, required less supportive coaching scaffolds, and requested very little modeling and co-teaching. They were able to implement recommendations with very little coaching, and did not seek affirmation often. This aligns with Knowles' adult learning theory, which asserts that while learners' experiences shape their learning, and learners are self-directed, "instruction should allow learners to discover things and knowledge for

themselves without depending on people. However, learners should be offered guidance and help when mistakes are made” (Pappas, 2013).

An additional suggestion for future research would be to extend the coaching supports to paraprofessionals in the building. Many schools now hire paraprofessionals as instructional assistants, who are teaching small groups of students, yet they have little to no educational training, especially compared to the teacher in the classroom. By offering these paraprofessionals coaching supports, they will not only feel valued and supported, but students will benefit from their increase in knowledge.

Collet’s (2008) Gradual Increase of Responsibility coaching model may be used as a form of professional development for teachers, in regard to student achievement. Many times, administrators identify an area of focus for a grade level or school based on student data. This identification is followed by professional development meetings, and expectations that teachers will change their practice to produce results. This model provides a support for professional development to take place in an authentic context, allowing the coach to work alongside the teacher to further student achievement.

Finally, another limitation of the study was the six-week timeframe. The researcher would suggest that, in order to evaluate the longevity of the effectiveness of the coaching model, teacher participants take part in follow up observations, following a specified time period after the coaching model has taken place. This would be to determine if, in fact, teacher practices have changed, and modeled skills have transferred and are now being carried out often and effectively. This would also give teachers a chance to formally ask for feedback in an authentic setting.

Conclusion

The problem of practice that initiated this study was derived from the missed opportunities to extend student thinking observed by the researcher during teacher-student conferences. This led to the overarching research question: How will the use of the Gradual Increase of Responsibility model (Collet, 2008) as a coaching model affect the level and frequency of questions asked during small group and independent student conferences as identified by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy? Analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, it was determined that the impact the Gradual Increase of Responsibility (Collet, 2008) coaching model demonstrated a positive increase in the number of higher-order questions asked during student conferences, and a decline in the number of lower-level, or basic recall questions that were asked. The model served as a tool to change teacher practices in an authentic manner, using embedded professional development, resulting in a significant change in instructional practices that ultimately benefitted the students by extending critical thinking.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER COMPETENCIES

- 1.1: Understand major theories and empirical research that describe the cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural foundations of reading and writing development, processes, and components, including word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading-writing connections.
- 2.2: Use appropriate and varied instructional approaches, including those that develop word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading-writing connections.
- 2.3: Connecting inquiry through the integration of Social Studies, Science, and Math, with literacy instruction leads students to build knowledge and emphasizing collaborative learning fosters independence and self-initiation in reading and learning.
- 2.7: Understand how to organize time and space to implement a variety of instructional frameworks in support of reading instruction.
- 2.12: Comprehension and vocabulary growth result primarily from engagement with texts and social interactions.

- 2.16: Understand that learning is social. Learners use written language as one of the means of making sense in the world; readers/writers learn more about written language and create deeper understandings as they talk with others about texts.
- 2.19: Know how to organize time and space to implement a variety of instructional frameworks in support of reading and writing instruction (e.g., know how to organize reading and writing instruction within a workshop approach to provide a framework for effective instruction).
- 2.20: Know how to scaffold learning incorporating a gradual release of responsibility approach (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).
- 3.4: Communicate assessment results and implications to a variety of audiences.
- 5.2: Design a social environment that is low risk and includes choice, motivation, and scaffold support to optimize students' opportunities for learning to read and write. High engagement during reading requires access to texts, time to read, reading success to promote agency, and a supportive literacy-rich environment.
- 5.4: Use a variety of classroom configurations (i.e., whole class, small group, and individual) to differentiate instruction.
- 6.3: Participate in, design, facilitate, lead, and evaluate effective and differentiated professional development programs. (South Carolina, 2014, pp. 1-18)

APPENDIX B

COACH COMPETENCIES

- 5.2: Design a social environment that is low risk and includes choice, motivation, and scaffolded support to optimize students' opportunities for learning to read and write. [Reading specialists may have responsibilities for teaching students who struggle with learning to read and must also be able to support teachers in their efforts to provide effective instruction for all students.]
- 5.3: Use routines to support reading and writing instruction (e.g., time allocation, transitions from one activity to another; discussions, and peer feedback).
- 5.4: Use a variety of classroom configurations (i.e., whole class, small group, and individual) to differentiate instruction.
- 6.1: Demonstrate foundational knowledge of adult learning theories and related research about organizational change, professional development, and school culture.
- 6.3: Participate in, design, facilitate, lead, and evaluate effective and differentiated professional development programs (South Carolina, 2014, pp. 1-

APPENDIX C

TIMELINE FOR STUDY

Time	Description of Activities	Materials Needed	Persons Involved
Prior to study	Gather information to complete study Distribute overview of study, collect convenience sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of study • Consent forms from school administration, school district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher • School Principal • School District Leader(s) • Kindergarten, First, and Second grade teachers
Prior to study	Teacher survey to obtain teacher experience, education level, and knowledge of research factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Survey (Appendix E) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher • Kindergarten, First, and Second grade teachers
Weeks 1-2	Observe teachers during independent student conferences, analyze conferences, and share findings with teachers. Develop plan for scaffolding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Observation and Analyzing Form (Appendix D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher • Kindergarten, First, and Second grade teachers
Weeks 3-5	Implement coaching model based on findings of initial observations. Scaffold as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Observation and Analyzing Form (Appendix D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher • Kindergarten, First, and Second grade teachers

	Teacher will complete conference observation form while observing coach.		
Weeks 6-7	Observe teachers again during independent student conferences, analyze conferences, and share findings with teachers. Compare results to initial observations and share findings with teachers.	Conference Observation and Analyzing Form (Appendix D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher • Kindergarten, First, and Second grade teachers
After study completion	Share results with stakeholders. Determine next steps for individual teacher or coach practices.	Data from study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher • Kindergarten, First, and Second grade teachers • Administration • Other Stakeholders

APPENDIX D

CONFERENCE OBSERVATION FORM

Observation Recording Sheet

Teacher:	Grade:	Date:
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Record questions asked during:

Independent Reading Conferences	Independent Writing Conferences

Tally questions when meeting with teacher and discuss results.

The Cognitive Process Dimension

The Knowledge Dimension	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyze	5. Evaluate	6. Create
A. Factual Knowledge						
B. Conceptual Knowledge						
C. Procedural Knowledge						
D. Metacognitive Knowledge						

APPENDIX E

TEACHER SURVEY

Pre/Post Teacher Survey

1. How many years have you been teaching (including current year)?

1-3 4-6 7-10 11-15 16-20 21+

2. What is your highest degree held?

Bachelor's Master's Master's +30 hours Doctorate

3. Are you currently working on a degree? If so, what?

Please complete the following chart.

How often do you...	Never/Almost never (0-1 time a week)	Sometimes (2-3 times a week)	Often (4-5 times a week)	I'm not sure what this is...
Use small group/independent student conferences in reading?				
Use small group/independent student conferences in writing?				
Use higher order questioning in reading conferences for <i>all</i> students?				
Use higher order questioning in writing conferences for <i>all</i> students?				

Please rate the following items, with 1 being the least, and 4 being the most.

How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge of conducting student conferences in reading?

1 2 3 4

How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge of conducting student conferences in writing?

1 2 3 4

What is your knowledge of the Bloom's Taxonomy Table and its use of analyzing questions?

1 2 3 4

How comfortable do you feel asking unplanned, higher-order questions?

1 2 3 4

How comfortable are you being observed while teaching?

1 2 3 4

How likely are you to participate in teacher-coach conversations regarding classroom observations and instruction?

1 2 3 4

How familiar are you with the Gradual Increase of Responsibility Coaching Model?

1 2 3 4

Please answer only in the post-survey:

What helped you the most during the process? If you feel your questioning practiced changed, how so, and what led to that change? If you feel that it did not, why do you think that is?

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION FOR USE

Below is permission for use of Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1.

Dr. Collet,

I really appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today. The dissertation process can certainly feel long sometimes, and I have a renewed excitement after speaking with you! If you don't mind, I would love to see a few of the things you mentioned:

- Mentoring and Coaching Guide
- Tracking form
- 2008 Presentation from NRC (I may be able to look this up myself)
- Questionnaire for teachers (I believe your questionnaire was specifically for induction teachers, and, while I wrote the questions down you suggested, would love to look over this again.)

Again, thank you for your time and input. I look forward to sharing my research with you!

Sarah Little
Literacy Coach

Vicki S. Collet @

September 28, 2018 at 3:00 PM



Re: Thank you!

To: Sarah Little



Hello, Sarah -

It was a pleasure speaking with you about the GIR Model. Attached are:

- *Conferencing Guide (I attached the version I used with the Sweeney group)
- *Tracking form (in Word so you can adjust; 4 per page)
- *My 2008 NRC presentation (first presentation of the GIR model). The citation is:

Collet, V. (2008). Coaching today's teachers: Mentoring using new literacies. Paper presented at the 2008 National Reading Conference, Orlando, Florida, Dec. 2008.

- *Interview questions for reflecting on the GIR cycle

I've also included the précis from my 2013 presentation at the International Literacy Assoc. conference, which is the Sweeney/GIR combo, since I thought that might be of interest to you.

I look forward to hearing about your outcomes!

Vicki S. Collet

Vicki Collet, Ph. D.
Associate Director, NWA Writing Project
Associate Professor, CIED
University of Arkansas
Most recent publications:
<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/QRJ-08-2016-0053>
<http://www.infoagepub.com/products/Across-the-Domains>

Below is permission for use of Table 2.2.

Hi Sarah,

Thank you for your call this morning. It's great to hear that you've found Diane and her team's work beneficial.

Yes, please feel free to use the continuum in your dissertation with the appropriate citations.

Best of luck to you in your future endeavors.

Dan

Regards,

Dan Sweeney | Project Manager
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